

Twelve
PRACTICAL DISCOURSES
On Several
SUBJECTS.

Preached at Court,
By LEWIS ATTERBURY, L.L.D. and ll
Rector of *Shipperton* in *Middlesex*.



L O N D O N :

Printed for THO. WARNER, at the *Black-
Boy* in *Pater-Noster-Row*, 1720.

Price Five Shillings.

h
ons
®

Twelve

PRACTICAL DISCOURSES

Several

SUBJECTS

Printed at Court

By LEWIS WATKINS, J.D. and
Register of the Court of Chancery



LONDON:

Printed for THO. WATKINS, at the Black-
ing in Pall-mall, near the Theatre

and the Spinning

THE CONTENTS.

Sermon I. Of the Being of a GOD.

Pfal. 14. 1. *The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God.* Page 1

Sermon II. Of God's Justice and Mercy.

Revel. 4. 3. *And there was a Rainbow about the Throne.* pag. 39

Sermon III. Of Miracles.

Pfal. 72. 18. *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things.* pag. 77

Sermon IV. Of Dreams.

Job 33. 14, 15, 16. *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not. In a Dream, in a Vision of the Night, when deep Sleep falleth upon Men, in Slumbrings upon the Bed; then he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction.* pag. 117

Sermon V. Of the Image of God in Man.

Gen. 1. 29. *So God created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him, Male and Female created he them.* pag. 157

Sermon VI. Of the real Presence in the Sacrament.

1 Cor. 11. 26, 27. *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come: Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* pag. 195

The CONTENTS.

Sermon VII. Of the Resurrection.

1 Cor. 15. 29. *Else what shall they do who are Baptized for the Dead, if the Dead rise not at all; why are they then Baptized for the Dead? and why stand we in Jeopardy every Hour?* pag. 245

Sermon VIII. Of Superstition.

Acts 17. 22. *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars-Hill and said, Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too Superstitious.* pag. 281

Sermon IX. Of Reason and Religion.

Rom. 12. the latter part of the 1st. Verse. *Which is your reasonable Service.* pag. 300

The whole Verse runs thus:

I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God; which is your reasonable Service. pag. 329

Sermon X. Of Reason and Religion.

Rom. 12. the latter part of the 1st. Verse. *Which is your reasonable Service.* pag. 371

Sermon XI. Of Thanksgiving for the Success of her Majesty's Arms.

Psal. 18. 49, 50. *Therefore will I give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and sing Praises unto thy Name. Great Deliverance giveth he to his King, and sheweth Mercy to his Anointed, to David, and his Seed for evermore.* pag. 407

Sermon XII. Of Submission to the Will of God.

Job 2. part of the 10th Verse. *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God? and shall we not receive Evil?* pag. 459

S E R M O N I.

Pfal. 14. 1.

*The Fool bath said in his
Heart there is no God.*

IT is a common, and no less true Observation, That the most Learned Ages have ever been the most Atheistical; which doth not proceed from any Tendency in Learning to the Disbelief of a Deity, but from Mens corrupt Minds and debauched Understandings. For as the same Sun which influences the most useful Herbs and delightful Flowers, gives Life also to the most poisonous Weeds : So Learning has its dif-

B ferent

Sermon First.

ferent Effects, according to the Dispositions and Constitutions of Men. If it meets with a discreet and sober Person, it makes him more devout and more affectionate, pursue the weighty Business of Religion with greater Ardour: But if with a Man of a wicked Life and Conversation, all the Use he makes of it, is, to gild over the Deformity of his Vices, and to furnish himself with specious Pretexts, to render his monstrous Opinions the more plausible. Hence in Scripture, wicked Men (tho' never so Learned and Wise as to the Affairs of this World) are called *Fools*, because they do not employ their Faculties in the Pursuit of the supream Happiness, they do not hearken to the Voice of sanctified Reason, but are hurried on by the Violence of their sensual Appetites, and submit them-

Sermon First.

3

themselves to *that Law in their Members which warreth against the Law of their Minds* ; they never take into their Consideration the powerful Motives of the Gospel, the Reasonableness of leading a Religious Life, the Torments of Hell, the Pleasures of Heaven ; but having made themselves *like the Beasts that perish*, they wish they may Die like them too ; having made it their Interest, there should be no future Life, no Day of Account, no God to judge and punish them ; they catch hold on every slight Pretence, improve every little Argument, to deceive themselves into an Opinion that there is none ; and at last, with the Fool in the Text, they *say in their Hearts there is no God.*

From which Words I shall shew,
I. What Notion the Generality
of Mankind have of a Deity, or

B 2

what

Sermon First.

what we mean when we say, *there is a God.*

II. What unaccountable Folly those Persons are guilty of who doubt of the Being of a God.

III. From whence it proceeds that those Men who are so Skilful and Wise as to the Concerns of this World, should be so foolish as to say *in their Hearts there is no God.*

Lastly, I will conclude with an Inference or two.

I. I shall consider what Notion the Generality of Mankind have of a Deity, or what we mean when we say *that there is a God.* Now, that *Idea* or Notion which Men generally conceive when they say *there is a God*, is this; That there is a Being who comprehends all possible Perfection. Every one who reflects on the Thoughts of
his

his own Heart, will find this Notion of God engraven there in such plain and legible Characters as may be easily read and spelt out by any sober Enquirer. For tho' with our Modern Reasoners we should deny that there are any seminal Principles, or innate Notions ; yet this is agreed on all hands, that there are some Truths so plain and undeniable, that the Understanding assents to them as soon as ever they are proposed to it. No Man can be so stupid as to deny that two and two make four, or that a part is lesser than the whole ; and thus whosoever contemplates the Being of a God, must consider him as the first Cause of all things, and that this first Cause comprehends in it whatsoever is Good, and whatsoever implies any Perfection. These are Truths so bright and shining, that

they may be seen by their own Light, and there is in the Understanding a natural Aptitude to embrace them, and close with them. And this is evident, because even the Heathens, how different soever their Opinions were about the Worship of their Deities, yet they all unanimously agreed, in attributing to them the noblest Perfections they could imagine; and the different Opinions they entertain'd of their Gods, proceeded from their Diversity of Thought about the Perfection of things. And therefore those Nations who were Effeminate and Luxurious, devoted themselves to *Venus* and *Bacchus*; those who were addicted to Learning and Warfare, worshiped *Minerva* and *Hercules*; every one painted his Idol with those Colours which seemed most lovely to himself, made him the Center of that
which

Sermon First.

7

which he called Happiness, and adored him as the most perfect and excellent Being.

This is that general Notion of a God which Mankind assents to; and whoever understands the Terms of this Proposition, that God is a Being of all possible Perfection, must acknowledge the Truth of it. This general Notion of a God was much improved by the Reasoning-men of the first Ages. The *Platonists* thought the surest way to Truth was to begin at the Fountain of all Knowledge, and by the Contemplation of the first Cause, to discover the most hidden Secrets of Nature. They thought that since all Perfection was comprehended in God, therefore all Knowledge must be gained by the Study of the first Cause. But alas! they did but deceive themselves and amuse the

World with some pompous Words and uncouth Expressions, which had nothing of solid or useful Knowledge in them. By poring too much on this excellent Object, they dazled their Sight, and at last embraced the Cloud of their own Fancy, instead of a Deity. The other Philosophers took the contrary, but more sure way. They considered first the Imperfections of Inferiour Beings; and these they denied concerning God: And hence they collected that God was Infinite, Incorporeal, Invisible and Unchangeable; and secondly they considered what Perfections were to be found in created Beings; and these they attributed to the supream Being in a most eminent manner: And hence they concluded, that God was Goodness, Truth, Wisdom, and Justice it self. This is the Summ of what the

Sermon First.

9

the Heathens knew concerning the Being and Essence of God, but not all that we Christians are to subscribe unto; since God has discovered himself more perfectly in the Holy Scriptures, which teach us that God is distinguished into three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and that these three are but one God blessed for ever. This Truth is plainly revealed to us in the Holy Scripture, and therefore we ought to assent to it, tho' we cannot comprehend the manner how it should be so. In this World we must be content to see *as thro' a Glass darkly*; 'tis a wonderful and adorable Mystery which may serve to exercise our Faith, and humble our Reason; but like the Ark, must not be too nearly pried into, or too nicely and critically examined; lest whilst we labour to encrease our Knowledge,

ledge, we lessen our Reverence and Devotion : 'Tis a Point which is of too large Extent, and of too great a Depth to be comprehended in our Minds, or fathomed with the short Plummet of Human Understanding. We are safe whilst we keep within the Bounds which the Holy Scripture has set us, and believe what we find revealed there ; but when we endeavour to explain the Being of God, or the Manner of the Existence of the *Trinity*, by the Maxims of the Schools, or the Criterions of *Plato* or *Aristotle* ; we only perplex our Thoughts, and render them more confused and obscure, than they were before. And therefore 'tis our wisest course to rest satisfied with those Revelations which God is pleased to make of himself, and to be content to *know only in part*, especially

Sermon First.

II

ally in those Points which our Reason it self tells us are beyond its reach, and which have no immediate influence on Practice and a good Life. Did but our great pretenders to Reason consider what an infinite distance there must needs be between the Being of God and our shallow Capacities; what an Infinitely Glorious Being God is, who is *exalted above all Praise*, and humbles himself whilst he permits us to Adore him; and what weak, ignorant Creatures we are, who do not understand those things we are constantly conversant about, such as Time, Motion, Place; nay, who are in a great measure Strangers to our selves, and ignorant of our own Frame and Composition; they must needs judge it highly reasonable to conclude, that 'tis as easie to take up the Sea in the Palm of our

our Hands, as to comprehend an Infinite God in our Finite Understandings; and that the Mysteries of the Divine Nature are the proper Objects of our Faith, rather than our Reason. But tho' we must set bounds to our Reasonings concerning the Essence of God, and take care that our Thoughts do not exceed their due limits; yet we cannot too firmly rivet this Perswasion, *that there is a God.* into our Minds and Consciences. The more we think of it, and the oftner we survey the Grounds and Reasons of our Belief, the firmer will our Assent be, and the less Reason we shall find to doubt of it, or call it in question: And therefore, tho' in a Congregation of Christians it may be thought a useless and unnecessary Task; yet since there are so many who not only live as if they believed there

is

is no God; but endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that there is none, I shall proceed to consider,

II. The Folly of those Men who say in their Hearts, *There is no God.*

And this will appear by considering, 1. How unreasonable 'tis, 2. How unprofitable, to call in question the Being of a God. And

1. How unreasonable a thing 'tis to doubt of the being of a God. And here it is to be considered, that the Atheist doth not pretend to any demonstrative Argument: he doth not go about to prove that 'tis impossible there should be such a Being as a God, nay, there are few that dare openly affirm and avow it. 'Tis rather the silent Wish and Surmise, than the settled Opinion

Opinion of any Man. The Fool in the Text only *said in his Heart there was no God*, but he did not pretend to defend it by dint of Argument and strict Reasoning: And therefore the most proper way to shew how unreasonable a thing it is to doubt of the Being of a God, is to prove positively that *there is such a Being as God*: And to this end I shall make use only of two, and those very obvious Arguments. And

I. That *there is such a Being as God*, will appear from hence; because the generality of Mankind in all places and at all times have been of this Opinion; because this is a Notion most natural to reasonable Creatures, which they readily embrace and retain longest. For even those Nations which have degenerated so far from the Excellency of their Divine Original,

nal, that they differ very little from Brute Beasts, which have neither Laws, nor Buildings, nor Government, yet retain the Sense of a supream Being. And tho' Modern Discoverers tell us of some People, who have no Notion of a God, (the Accuracy of whose Observations may be deservedly suspected) yet this can be no reasonable Objection; because they give such Descriptions of these People, 'that they ought to be esteemed Brutes in Human Shape, and Monsters in their Kind, rather than Men. 'Tis plain, that in all civilized Nations this Belief has universally obtained; and generally the more civilized any People have been, (*i. e.*) the more they have given themselves up to the Conduct of their Reason, which is the Standard of their Humanity; the more deeply, and the

the more clearly the Notion of a God has been impressed upon their Minds, and therefore ought to be lookt on as one of the Principles of Reason, and Dictates of our Nature : For as Tully well observes, *Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ autem judicia confirmat* : Those Opinions which Men light upon by Chance, and are not well grounded, are worn out in Tract of Time : But those Maxims which have a Foundation in Nature, and are self-evident, are always the same, and appear more plain the more they are canvassed and considered.

2. We must admit some first Cause of things; for whoever considers the wonderful Frame of the World, what admirable Order and excellent Beauty are evidently discovered in it, must needs conclude, that 'tis the Contrivance of some intelligent

Sermon First.

17

intelligent Being. The *Heavens* declare the *Glory of God*, and the *Firmament* sheweth his handy Work: Every part of the Universe, even inanimate and senseless Beings, declare to their fellow Creatures, who it was that created them, and celebrate the Praises of their Maker. This is certainly a most reasonable Hypothesis; whereas there is nothing more absurd than that of the *Epicureans*, who fancied the World was produced by Chance, (*i. e.*) by a casual meeting of the several parts which composed it; which needs no other Confutation, but to consider whether we have seen any thing like it amongst the Operations of Nature. Did we ever see a Picture drawn with the careless touch of a Pencil, or a Watch fall together by Chance? Much less can this wonderful Machine of the World,

C

in

in which there are so many Springs and Wheels, such a vast number, and regular Disposition of Parts, be the Production of a blind Casualty. ' Let a Man but consider the least part of it, the most inconsiderable Insect, and he will discover such admirable Operations, as by far surpass the most exquisite Productions of Art. Let him but take a Survey of his own Body, let him contemplate the vast Number and Variety, the different, and yet exact Disposition of the Parts; how every Part answers to its proper Use and Intention, and serves to promote the Welfare of the whole; how every Atom, which composes his Body, is made in exact Weight, Measure, and Proportion; and he will be forced to confess with the Psalmist, *that he is fearfully and wonderfully made.* But suppose I should grant to the Admirers

Ps. 39. 14.

Sermon First.

19

Admirers of the *Epicurean Hypothesis*, that the World was produced by Chance ; yet they must needs be at a Loss, when they come to explain to us, how that regular Motion and excellent Order which we see in it, is kept up. 'Tis confessed on all hands, that the Parts of Time have no Connexion, one Moment doth not depend upon another ; so that the Preservation of the World in that State and Condition it is in, is as great a Miracle as its first Formation was. What Power then is it, that cements the jarring Particles of the Universe, that so regularly moves the two great Lamps of Heaven, that enables the *Sun like a Giant to run his Race*, and Marshals the Stars in their several Courses ? who is it that forms the *Fœtus* in the Womb, that *works* Pl. 139. 15. *it as it were with a Needle*, (for

C 2 so

Sermon First.

so the Words of the *Psalmist* signify in the Original;) that directs the several Instincts of Animals, that teaches the Bird to build its Nest, and the Spider to weave its Web, and guides Irrational Creatures in the Preservation of their Beings? What Power can this be, but that first Principle of Life and Motion which first created this World out of Nothing, and still preserves it with a Fatherly Care, from shrinking into Nothing again? From these and such like Considerations, a *Noble Author* concludes, that 'tis far more rational to believe all the Fables of the Poets, the *Legend*, the *Talmud*, and the *Alcoran*, than that this universal Frame should be without a Creator and Governor. But,

*Ld. Bacon's
Essays.*

2. The questioning the Being of a God, is not only unreasonable, but unprofitable and uncomfortable

fortable also; and could we bring our Minds to such a Perswasion as this, 'twould be of no Use or Advantage to us: For there can be no Reason why Men should desire that there should be no God to govern the World, but only this, that they might lead wicked and sensual Lives, without any Remorse of Conscience, or Fear of Punishment; that they might indulge themselves in unlawful and prohibited Pleasures, and gratify their Appetites to their utmost Extent; which, whether 'tis desirable or no, I shall not now stand to determine, tho' I believe it would not be difficult to prove, that a sober and rational Enjoyment of the good things of this World, according to the Rules of right Reason, and the Laws of the Christian Religion, will produce more Joy and true Pleasure, in the Mind

of a good Man, than the most luxurious Gratifications of Sense, in the most successfully Debauched. But, I say, taking it for granted, that could Men perswade themselves there were no such Being as a God, they might enjoy their Pleasures with a more unbounded Freedom and sweeter Gust; yet what Advantage would this be to them, when they consider that at the same time they deprive themselves of those more solid Comforts, which alone can render a Man's Life in this World easy and tolerable; when by calling in question the Being of a God, they take themselves out of the hands of a loving and indulgent Father, and commit themselves to Chance and Fortune, or what is worse, to the Conduct of their unruly Lusts and ungovernable Passions. For what a wonderful Comfort must
it

it needs be, for a good Man to consider, that amidst all the Vicissitudes of Sublunary Affairs, the Changes and Misfortunes of this miserable Life, there is a good God in Heaven, who looks down and beholds all his Actions, who is both willing and able to support him under all Afflictions and Temptations, and has promised to deliver him out of all his Troubles, and will give him a full Recompense hereafter, for all the Evils he can possibly undergo in this Life? And I am fully perswaded, that *St. Paul*, in his Chains, and amidst all that long Catalogue of Afflictions which he reckons up, enjoyed more true and real Satisfaction and Happiness, than *Cæsar*, or *Seneca*, than the most fortunate Emperors, or wisest Philosophers amongst the Heathens: Whereas an Atheist, in a time of Affliction, or

under any Trouble or Calamity, is the most miserable Wretch under the Cope of Heaven ; he has every thing to deject, and nothing to comfort him, uneasy under his present Condition, and out of all Hopes of bettering it hereafter. And since our Lives in this World are encumbred with continual Cares and Disquietudes, Pains and Diseases, Losses and Disappointments, a Wise Man would hardly think it worth his while to prolong a miserable Life, were it not that he hopes to arrive at a State attended with none of these Troubles and Inconveniencies. 'Twould exhaust more Time than I have now to spend, to discourse fully upon this Subject ; but from what I have already hinted, I think 'tis evident, that such *Fools* as this in the Text, who call in question the Being of a God, argue not only

only in Contradiction to their own Reason, but their truest Interest also; and therefore we may justly wonder

III. From what Source these Atheistical Thoughts proceed, and how it comes to pass, that those who are so Skilful and Wise as to the Affairs of this World, should be guilty of so great Folly as to doubt of the Being of a God. And this proceeds from such Causes as these, either

I. From Inconsideration. Men are Creatures of Sense, and take in all their Hints and Notices of things from material Objects; and 'tis with very great Difficulty that they form abstracted Notions; what is not gross enough to be seen, they for the most part think too nice to be considered, and call in question every thing they do not compre-

comprehend ; and hence 'tis that a great part of Mankind *have not God in all their Thoughts.* They do not indeed deny the Being of a Deity, for they hardly ever considered whether there was one or no ; and tho' God made them upright, that they might look up to that Heaven from whence they derived their Original, yet their Thoughts are always groveling upon the Earth, and provided they can make sure of the good things of this World, they are not much solicitous what will become of them hereafter.

2. Atheistical Thoughts do frequently proceed from a Carnal Consideration of Divine Providence ; for when wise and considerate Men observe, that the good things of this World seem to be distributed with an undistinguishing Hand, that the Sun shines on the

Sermon First.

27

the Good and the Bad, and the Rain falls upon the Fields of the Just and the Unjust; nay, that it often happens to the Wicked after the Lot of the Righteous, who enjoy all that their Hearts can wish, and go down to their Graves in peace; they are too apt to conclude, that if there were a God that governed the World, Justice would be more equally administred, and to say with the Psalmist, *Verily I have washed my Hands in Innocency, and cleansed my Heart in vain*; little considering, that tho' we know not whither the Wheels of God's Providence move, yet there is an Eye within the Wheels which governs and directs them, and that there is no Event in the World but God has consulted well and wisely about it, and ordered it to some good End or other; and tho' for the present the Clue of Human

Pl. 37. 13.

man Affairs seems confused and tangled with inextricable Difficulties, yet all will be unravelled at the last Day, when the Wicked shall meet with their deserved Punishment, and the Righteous receive their promised Reward.

3. Atheism is much propagated by the many Disputes which are in the World, concerning the Tenents of our Faith: for when Men Immoral in their Lives, and unsettled in their Principles, do observe the Professors of Christianity earnestly contend for two Opinions, which cannot be both true, their Interest will incline them to conclude, that both are false. When one shall say, *lo here is Christ*, and another, *lo there is Christ*, and every Party confine Salvation to their own way; they give loose Persons too much occasion to BlaspHEME, and through their sides to wound

wound Religion ; for they are so intent upon the Advantage which these Men give them, that they will not consider, that those Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, which are absolutely necessary to Salvation are very few, and either dictated to us by natural Reason, or else plainly revealed in the Holy Gospel ; so that every well-disposed Person may apprehend them : and that those Controversies which have made the most Noise, and have been most fatal to the Repose of the Christian World, have been about Matters of little Concernment or Influence on Mens Practice; but kept up chiefly by the Interests and Passions of those who managed them : And how unreasonable it is that the Faults and Frailties of the Professors of Christianity, should be laid to the Charge of
of

of our Holy and Peaceable Religion, I leave our Adversaries themselves to determine. But,

Lastly, Atheism owes its Original and Increase, chiefly to the Pravity of our Wills, to the Lusts and Vices of Men: For when vicious and debauched Men shall consider, that they have lived so Licentiously in this World, that they have little Hopes of being Happy hereafter, their Interest will incline them first to wish that there should be no God to punish them, *no future Life*, when they shall be called to Account for their Misdeeds; and then to conclude that there is none. And that this is so, will be plain from this one Observation, that Men do not first imbibe Atheistical Principles, and then regulate their Lives by them; but for the most part they immerse themselves in sensual Pleasure, and lead
wicked

Sermon First.

31

wicked Lives ; and then they put their Wits upon the Tenters, and take hold of every seeming Argument, which may serve to justify their Doings. These are the chief of those many Fallacies whereby the Devil has imposed upon Mankind, and propagated Atheism in the World. I shall now only make some Inferences from what has been already delivered, and then conclude.

I. If we believe there is such a Being as a God, then how careful ought we to be, to avoid all Prophane and Atheistical Company; Men that make it the Business of their Lives to ridicule Religion, and to Blaspheme the God that made them, and with one word of his Displeasure can reduce them into a most wretched and miserable Condition? For if
it

it is thought below the Character of a Man of Honour, or one that is of a generous Disposition, to sit still and hear his best Friend, and most noble Benefactor vilified and reproached; with what Patience can a good Man endure to hear the Great God of Heaven and Earth, *in whom we live, and* Acts 17.28. *move, and have our Beings,* who has given us all the good things of this Life, and from whom we expect the glorious Rewards of the Life to come, made the Subject of the Jest and Drollery of Prophan Men? Especially since there is so much Danger, that by frequenting their Company, we should not only partake in their Sin, but imitate their Examples; for tho' at the first we must needs detest and abhor their Impiety, yet Use will render it familiar, and Familiarity will beget a Secret

cret Liking of it ; especially when 'tis gilded over with a Show of Wit, and agreeable Conversation : And I am fully perswaded, that if those Persons who are arrived at the highest Pitch of Irreligion and Prophaneness, had been told at first, what an unhappy Proficiency they should make, they would have thought it absolutely impossible ; for wicked Habits are contracted by slow Steps and insensible Motions ; and if we give never so little Allowance and Encouragement to our sinful Inclinations, they will soon take possession of our Hearts, and we shall be insnared by them unawares.

2. If there is such a Being as a God, let us be sure to Worship and Adore him, to pay him the Tribute of the *Calves of our Lips*, the Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving. For 'tis Natural for Men

D

to

to exprefs their Veneration of a Being according to that worth and excellency which they apprehend to be in it. If therefore we look upon God as the most excellent and most perfect Being, let us make the most humble Acknowledgments of his Worth and Dignity, and Worship him with the most profound Veneration. This is the Reasoning of the Psalmist in the 95th Psalm, where having exhorted all Nations to Worship God : *O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoyce in the Strength of our Salvation ; let us come before his Presence with Thanksgiving, and shew our selves glad in him with Psalms,* he makes use of a Motive drawn from the Excellency of God's Nature ; *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods ;* and from his Goodness and Bounty ; *For he is the Lord*
our

our God, and we are the People of his Pasture, and the Sheep of his Hands.

3. If we believe a God, let us also acknowledge his Providence. For, to pretend to believe a God, and yet to frame in our Minds such a Notion of him as if he were an unconcerned Spectator of Human Affairs, wholly taken up with the Enjoyment of himself, and did not regard what is done upon Earth ; is equally as absurd as to deny that there is any God at all. This indeed was the *Epicurean* Hypothesis, and is that which some of our *Modern Deists* take up with ; but they were lookt upon by the more sober Heathens, as downright Atheists. For to frame unworthy and dishonourable Notions of God, is in Effect to deny his Being, since it implies the plainest Contradiction imaginable,

That an infinitely perfect Being should not exert his Perfections for the well Governing of the World : For if God is infinitely Wise, he must needs take notice of all the Transactions of Human Affairs ; if God is infinitely Good, he must needs be desirous to communicate his Goodness to all his Creatures, according to their different Capacities ; if God is infinitely Just, he must needs render to every one according to his Deserts ; and if he is infinitely Powerful, he can effect whatsoever he pleases. This is the Argument frequently made use of in the Holy Scripture, where, from the Consideration of the Divine Attributes and Perfections, 'tis inferred, that God's Providence watches over, and directs the Affairs of this World, with a vigilant Eye and steady Hand ; so
that

Sermon First.

37

that we may well conclude with
the Psalmist, *Verily there is a Re-
ward for the Righteous; verily
there is a God that judgeth the
World.*

The End of the First Sermon.

28 X 58

D 3

S E R-

30

1797

1797

1797

1797

1797

1797

1797

1797

S E R M O N II.

Revel. 4. 3.

And there was a Rainbow about the Throne.

IT is one chief Excellency of the Holy Scripture, and Mark of its Divine Extraction and Original, that its Truths are adapted to all Capacities : Some Streams of this Fountain of Life are so shallow, a Lamb may wade in them, others so deep, an Elephant may swim ; and as 'tis reported of *Manna*, that it was suitable to every ones Taste, so it may be truly said of this Bread of Life, that 'tis accommodated to

D 4 the

the most different Apprehensions. There are some Truths in the Holy Writ so profound, that they baffle the Industry of the most curious Speculation ; there are others so plain, to wit, all those which are absolutely necessary to Salvation, that they discover themselves to the unlearned Reader, and like the Sun will be seen by their own Light, by every one who is not naturally Blind, or else wilfully shuts his Eyes. The Book of the *Revelations* has always been deservedly esteemed one of the most difficult parts of Holy Scripture ; and tho' some Learned Men have made probable Conjectures concerning those Passages which relate to Times past, yet 'tis agreed on all hands, that those Chapters which relate to things future, can only be interpreted by that Spirit by which they were at first writ.

But

But yet amongst the dark Presages of things to come, there are intermixed many practical Truths, which are highly worthy our Observation, and some Hieroglyphicks so easy to be understood, that they require no great Study or Elaborateness of Thought, to come at their Meaning; and therefore the Author of this Book begins his Visions with these Words: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the Words of this Prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein.* And of this sort are the Words of the Text: *And there was a Rainbow about the Throne.*

1. By the Throne, is plainly set forth to us God's Justice.

2. By the Rainbow God's Mercy.

3. And by the Rainbow being placed about the Throne, the Mixture

ture of God's Justice with his Mercy, that these two Sisters go always Hand in Hand, and by the mutual Communication of their different Graces, render all the Dispensations of God's Providence lovely and beautiful.

That by the Throne God's Justice is intended, appears from *Psal. 9. 4. For thou hast maintained my Right and my Cause, thou sittest in the Throne judging Right*; and therefore *Psal. 122. 5. 'tis called the Throne of Judgment*. And that the Rainbow is an Emblem of God's Mercy, is plain from the 12th and 13th Verses of the 9th Chapter of *Genesis*, where 'tis made a Token of God's Covenant of Mercy: *And God said, this is the Token of the Covenant which I make between me and you, and every living Creature that is with you for all Generations; I do set my Bow*

Bow in the Clouds, and it shall be for a Token of a Covenant between me and the Earth. And thus you find both these Hieroglyphicks made use of Ezek. 1. the 26, 27, 28, Verses: And above the Firmament that was over their Heads, was the Likeness of a Throne, as the Appearance of a Saphire Stone; and upon the Likeness of the Throne, was the Likeness as the Appearance of a Man above upon it; and I saw as the colour of Amber, as the Appearance of Fire round about within it: From the Appearance of his Loins even upward, and from the Appearance of his Loins even downwards, I saw as it were the Appearance of Fire, and it had Brightness round about as the Appearance of a Bow that is in a Cloud in a Day of Rain, &c.

This being plainly the Design of the Words, I shall consider them more particularly. 1. By

Sermon Second.

1. By the *Throne*, God's Justice is plainly intimated to us ; which may be taken either in general for the Rectitude of God's Nature, or more specially for his Dealings with his Reasonable Creatures, according to their Deeds. In this last Sense 'tis denoted by the *Throne* in the Text ; and thus considered, 'tis the same in the Moral World as Order and Proportion is in the Natural ; 'tis giving to every thing its due Place and Station, and disposing of it according to its Nature. 'Tis defined *constans & perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuendi*. A constant and perpetual Purpose of Mind to give every thing its due. And this Definition well agrees with that Heavenly Justice which is originally in God as its Fountain, and is essential to him, since the Will of God is the only Standard

dard by which his Justice is directed in the Government of the World ; which Justice of God's Will flows naturally from the Goodness of his Nature, which determines his Will to those things which are best and fittest to be done ; and that his Will should be thus determined to those things which are best and most convenient, is as consistent with its Liberty as 'tis with the Infiniteness and Unlimitedness of his Power, that it should be determined to those things which are possible. And therefore an Action is not properly said to be good only, because God wills it ; but God wills it because 'tis good. Hence the Will of God, being guided by the Goodness of his Nature, cannot be turned aside by any Passions and Affections, is not subject to such Changes and Vicissitudes

tudes as the Wills of frail Men are ; but is an unalterable and constant Rule of Justice, without the least Variation or Change, such as it becomes the original Standard of equal and impartial Justice to be. So that whilst we contemplate *God sitting on the Throne*, it will suggest to us these following Considerations.

I. That God sees and takes notice of all our Actions.

II. That God will reward or punish us according to our Deeds.

III. The Misery of our Condition, who are not able of our selves to do any thing towards the satisfying of God's Justice, or making an Atonement for our Sins and Miscarriages. Whilst we contemplate *God sitting on the Throne*, it will lead us to consider,

I. That God sees and takes notice of all our Actions. That 'tis
not

Sermon Second.

47.

not possible to conceal any Action,
no, nor any Thought of our Hearts
from the All-seeing Eye of God,
who searches the Heart, and tryes the Rom. 8. 27.
Reins, and tells unto Man his Thought.

All things are naked to his View, Heb. 4. 13.

τελεγχιδισμένα, Anatomis'd and Dis-
sected, their inward and most re-
mote parts discovered, as the Word
signifies. The understanding of
this the Psalmist doth acknowledge
to be above the Reach of Human
Capacity. *Such Knowledge* (says
he) *is too wonderful for me, it is*
so high I cannot attain to it ; but
yet he shews how reasonable 'tis
that we should believe it. He that Pf. 19. 94.
formed the Eye, shall not he see ?
he that teacheth Knowledge, shall
not he know ? The Royal Psalmist
excellently describes it, represent-
ing to us the deplorable Condition
of that Person, who being deeply
sensible of the Heinous Nature of
his

his Sins, would fain fly to some place where he should be out of God's Presence. *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? if I go into Heaven, thou art there ; if I make my Bed in Hell, thou art there also. If I think to travel and quit my Country, and to dwell in the utmost parts of the Sea, yet I can neither leave my Conscience nor my God behind me. If I think to secure my self in Darkness, and cloud my Sin in thick Darkness, yet God's Eye is there too, the Day and the Night are both alike to him. And certainly did Men but frequently entertain such Thoughts as these in their Minds, that God is every where, and beholds the most secret Intents and Purposes of the Heart, they durst not allow themselves in the most secretly contrived Sin, or say within themselves,*
God

Sermon Second.

49

God doth not see, he doth not require Ps. 10. 13.

it. Did they consider, that if they go into their Closets, God is there, if into their Beds, he is there also; that he weighs their Actions in the Ballance of the Sanctuary; that he writes down all their Words in his Book, and Records the most secret Thoughts of their Hearts; they would not be so foolish as to imagine, that Darknes could hide their Sin, or Privacy conceal their Iniquity. Let us therefore forbear to satisfy our Lusts, tho' never so privately contrived, and to please our vain and inordinate Desires, till we can either bribe God to turn away his Eyes, or withdraw our selves from his Inspection. Till then, to be secure, is to be desperate, and to Sin wilfully, to affront him to the Face; for it implies we believe either that God doth not take no-

E

tice

tice of our Sins, or that he is not able to punish them. Which brings me to the second Consideration which this *Throne* will suggest to us.

II. That God will certainly Reward, or Punish us according to our Deeds.. The Judge of all the Earth must needs do Right. *The Lord is Just in all his Ways, and Righteous in all his Works,* says the Psalmist: For God must needs hate Sin and love Vertue, because the one is agreeable to the Purity and Rectitude of his Nature, the other is directly contrary to his Essential Sanctity, and those wise Ends which he proposes to himself in the Government of the World. And if God hates Sin, then it must needs follow, that he will punish it; for tho' 'tis truly said, that any one may remit

Sermon Second.

51

as much as he pleases of his own Right, yet this will hold good only as to Right of Dominion, not as to Right of Office: For God is not only the Supream Lord, but also the Governor of the Universe, and the Judge of Reasonable Creatures; and therefore is obliged to punish Sin by the Rectitude of his Nature and Will, tho' not by any Law or Power Superiour to himself. This was so generally acknowledged by the more Virtuous and Intelligent Heathens, that the Philosopher thought Men ought rather to be scourged than argued into the Belief of this Article of their Faith. And in truth there can be no clearer Proof of this Branch of God's Providence, than the many extraordinary Instances of God's Dealings with Mankind, in protecting the Good and punishing the Wicked, which

E 2

will

will ever remain upon Record, as the standing Monuments of his Justice and Goodness. I might transcribe a thousand Instances out of Sacred and Prophane Writings, but these are so obvious and common to be met with, that I shall rather leave them to your own Observations ; especially considering that there is hardly any Man but from his own Experience, and from the contemplation of the private Occurrences of his own Life, may plainly perceive the Finger of God administering Justice, both to Publick Societies and Private Persons. For tho' some Men have the seeming Happiness to go down to their Graves in Peace, and to carry the Reputation of Successful Wickedness along with them ; yet they shall one time or other receive the due Demerit of their evil Deeds. God will at last bring to
light,

Sermon Second.

53

light, and severely punish the Ungodly Practices of wicked Men, tho' never so cunningly plotted, and secretly carried on. Divine Vengeance has Iron Hands, tho' Leaden Feet, and tho' slow-paced at first, yet will overtake the Sinner at long run, how much soever he seems to have got the Start. Some Mens Sins are punished in this World, whilst others are reserv'd for a future Judgement, and good Reason it should be so; for (as the Father well observ'd) *St. Austin.* if all Mens Sins were punished in this World, there would be no need of a general Account; and if some did not feel the Lashes of God's Vengeance for their Impiety in this Life, Men would not believe there was a Providence, or a God. Let no Man therefore rest secure in the Success of a prosperous Villany; *for tho' Hand*

Pro. 11. 21. *join in Hand, yet the Wicked shall not go unpunished; which brings me to the third Consideration which the Throne suggests to us.*

III. The Misery of our Condition, who are not able of our selves to do any thing towards the satisfying God's Justice, and making an Atonement for our Sins and Miscarriages. There will certainly come a time when we shall all stand before the Throne of God, to be Judged according to our Works, and to receive Sentence according to our Deeds done in the Flesh, when the whole World
 Isa. 34. 4. *shall be on Fire, the Heavens shall be shrivelled up like a Scroll of Parchment, the Elements melt with fervent Heat, and the Earth and all that is therein shall be burnt up; when both the Book of God's Law, and the Book of our own Consci-*

Consciences shall be opened, and all our Thoughts, Words and Actions writ in plain and legible Characters, and exposed to the View of Men and Angels, and the Devil, our Accuser, shall read our Indictment against us, aggravating our Sins with all the most heightning Circumstances. And then, were not the Throne *en-* Pl. 130. 4. *compassed with this Rainbow ; were there not Mercy with him, that he might be feared, what Course could we possibly take ? Could we either avoid or endure the Vengeance of an angry God ? Could we withstand the Power, or oppose the Wrath of the Almighty ? To fancy this, would be the most desperate Folly. What then ? Should we deny the Fact, our Consciences will be instead of a thousand Witnesses. Or should we call to the Mountains to fall*

on us, and cover us ? Alas ! they will shake and tremble no less than we. But is there no Balm in our *Gilead* ? Is there no Help for poor miserable Men within their own reach ? Was Misery so surely entailed upon them after the Fall, that there is no Possibility of reversing the Sentence by their own Means ? No certainly , our Strength is but Weakness, we have no Power to raise our selves out of this miserable Condition, or to give the least helping Hand towards our Recovery. All that Strength which God gave us at the first, we lost by the Fall of our first Parents, and have forfeited that Grace which he has afforded us since, by the Misuse of it. So that if we look down only upon our selves, we shall find nothing but this dismal Prospect of Horror and Despair ; we can claim nothing of
God,

God, nor have we any thing of our own to succour and help us ; to us belongs Confusion of Face and everlasting Misery, *Lamentation, Mourning and Woe.* But if we look up unto Heaven, we may there behold that Bow which God has placed about the Throne, to remind us of that Covenant of Mercy which God has established with us, and ratified and confirmed it with the Blood of his dearly beloved Son, to assure every broken Heart and truly penitent Sinner, that tho' he is a terrible Judge to obstinate Offenders, yet he will be a gracious and merciful Saviour to all those who are reconciled to him thro' Christ, and have their Sins pardoned by his Death and Satisfaction. Θεὸς διὰ μνηστεύσεως. God is both able and willing to recover us out of that desperate Condition into which we have reduced our

Dan. 9. 9. our selves. *To the Lord our God belongs Mercy and plenteous Forgiveness, tho' we have rebelled against him. And therefore 'tis observable that this Bow has no String: 'Tis not bent to execute God's Vengeance upon us, but 'tis placed about the Throne, as Instruments of War used to be in times of Peace, amongst the Romans for Ornaments to their Houses and the Temples of their Gods. 'Tis a Bow without an Arrow, denoting to us, that our Blessed Saviour has appeased God's Wrath, and taken away the Sting of Sin and Death, and as it were disarmed God's Justice; so that now every one who is reconciled to God thro' Christ, has no Reason to fear*
 Ps. 91. 6. *the Arrows that fly by Night, nor the Pestilence that walketh at Noon-day, the most dreadful Threatnings and Judgments of God; for God*
 has

has laid aside his Thunder out of his Hand, and is ready to embrace us with the Arms of a loving and indulgent Father. And lastly 'tis a *Bow encompassing the Throne*, denoting to us, that God's Mercy is exalted above his Justice ; for tho' all God's Attributes are equal, as they are essentially in God, yet in their Effects and in the Exercise of them, they shine with a different Lustre ; and the Goodness of God is that Attribute which in a peculiar manner adorns the Divine Nature, and renders it amiable and lovely, as well as venerable and adorable. God's Mercy, which is only the Exercise of his Goodness towards Offenders, is represented in the Holy Scripture with peculiar Priviledges above the rest of his Attributes. God is stiled, *the Father of Mercy*, *he is rich* 2 Cor. 1. 3. *in Mercy*, and *Mercy is said to* Eph. 2. 4. *please*

Mich. 9. 19. *please him*; he desires to be known
 Exod. 34. 6 by this Attribute to the whole
 Jam. 2. 13. *World*; *he is the Lord God gracious and merciful*, and publickly declares, that his Mercy rejoyses over Judgment. And therefore the Rainbow is placed about the Throne, to signify to us, that God is always mindful of his gracious and merciful Covenant made with Mankind; and that in the midst of Justice, he remembers Mercy. And this appears, in that, first, he doth not take notice of all our Failings, so as to punish them, for then no Man living could stand before him; nor, secondly, doth his Anger bear pace with our Provocations; and thirdly, when he is provoked, yet is he ready and willing to be reconciled to us; and fourthly, he never punishes till all other Means prove unsuccessful. Nay, even the Execution
 of

Sermon Second.

61

of God's Justice is made to serve the gracious Purposes of his Mercy, and his Punishments are rather *παιδεία*, Motives to our Amendment, than *τιμωρία*, Acts of his Revenge; even Damnation it self was threatened against the obstinate Sinner, that Men might be frightened into Happiness, and that *knowing the* ^{2 Cor. 5. 11.} *Terrors of the Lord*, they might be prevailed on to repent and avoid them. And therefore God never punishes but when Order, (*i. e.*) the Good of the Universe, requires it; and consequently never, but when upon the whole, 'tis best so to do. God takes no Pleasure or Delight in it, 'tis *his strange Work*, ^{Isa. 28. 21.} and only made use of when milder Methods will not prevail on the incorrigible Offender. God first endeavours to draw us to himself by the Cords of a Man, by Love and Gratitude, and makes us the
Tenders

Tenders of his Grace and Favour, and never unsheaths the Sword of his Justice till we have slighted the Overtures of his Love, and declared our selves his open Enemies. Nay, so wonderfully indulgent is God to Mankind, that he has bestowed upon them one Priviledge, as a peculiar Token of his Favour, which was never granted to the Angels themselves; for tho' Angelick Beings have largely tasted of God's Love and Bounty, being raised to a degree of Glory and Happiness much superiour to that of Man; yet Man alone was made choice of to be the Object of God's Mercy, to have the Advantage of second Thoughts, and to be admitted to the Grace of Repentance; which is an extraordinary Favour, whether we consider the Extensiveness of the Benefit which accrues to Man by it, or the wonderful

derful Means by which it was effected. And now having considered both the Justice and Mercy of God, I come to consider,

Lastly, What good Lessons may be learned from the Consideration of both these Attributes of God.

1. We may learn to rectify several common Mistakes concerning God's Justice and Mercy. For those who either extol God's Justice so much as to leave no room for his Mercy, or extend his Mercy so far as to exclude his Justice, must needs be much in the wrong, and incur the Penalty of that Curse which is denounced against such as part those whom God has nearly allied and joined together. Of the first sort are those, who teach such Doctrines as infer God to be a cruel and arbitrary Being, who takes Delight in the Misery of his poor Creatures, and has created

created the Generality of Mankind on purpose to torment them, and make them for ever miserable; who has enacted such Laws as are impossible to be kept, and made Mens Duty so difficult, that they are not able to perform it, and then like an *Egyptian* Task-master, scourges them for the Neglect of it; whose Commands are the arbitrary Dictates of his Will, and are good only because God enjoins them, without any Respect to their Conformity with the Nature of those Beings which are to be governed by them. Thus they describe to us a Bloody and Tyrannical *Moloch*, instead of a Being of infinite Goodness and Perfection, and speak as ill of God as they could do of the Devil himself. Of the latter sort are those who extend God's Mercy too far, and make the narrow way to Heaven so broad,

broad, that Men may enter in, tho' they bring all their Vices, all their unruly Passions and unmortified Affections along with them. And these are either Papists or Protestants. The Papists are very grossly guilty of this Error, and commonly teach, and generally believe too, that if Men are entered into the true Church by Baptism, and have an implicit Faith in the Articles of the *Creed*, (i.e.) if they believe as the Church believes, (tho' they neither know what the Church is, nor what the Church believes, much less the Meaning of those Articles which they are to assent to) and submit to the Discipline and Censures of their Ecclesiastical Superiours, they are in a safe way to Heaven: Their Original Guilt is washed away by Baptism, and all their Sins, after Baptism, will be remitted, by undergoing

F the

the Sacrament of Penance; and this also may be commuted for, and bought off for a small Sum of Money. This is a Gospel directly contrary to that of our Blessed Saviour, who pronounced the Poor and Miserable of this World Blessed, who preached *Joyful Tydings* to the Captives; whereas if this Doctrine were true, the greatest Villany in the World could not exclude a Man from Heaven, if his Poverty did not. Not less dangerous is that Notion of Repentance, which is made to consist, by many of their Casuists, in a bare Sorrow for the doing such Actions as render them liable to Punishment, without any real Change of Mind, Hatred of Sin, or settled Resolutions of Amendment; so that at this Rate Men need not care how they live; if they have but time to express their
Sorrow

Sorrow at the last Gaspe when they can sin no longer, and to receive Absolution; they shall certainly be saved. There are Protestants, who if not equally guilty of the same Fault, yet are as much to blame, and entertain very false and dangerous Notions of the Mercy of God. Some there are who rely on a solitary Faith in Christ Jesus for the Hopes of Salvation, tho' they omit that other Condition which is equally as necessary, Obedience to all the Commands of God, and Holiness of Life. Others there are, who having fancied themselves the Elect of God, and Favourites of Heaven, imagine they are so surely predestin'd to Eternal Life, that no Default of theirs can forfeit their Title. These are false Notions of God's Mercy, which being unwarily taken up, end in

Presumption, and are far more dangerous to Men's eternal Welfare than Despair it self. But *let us not be deceived*, or rather let us not wilfully and foolishly impose upon our selves, for *God will not be mocked*; our Salvation is a Business of Weight and Moment, and of Difficulty too; and therefore
 2 Pet. 1. 10. *it concerns us to give all Diligence to make our Calling and Election*
 Phil. 2. 12. *sure, and to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*; that at the last Day, when we shall expect to be received into Abraham's Bosom, we may not be cast out to keep Company with the Devil and his Angels; and therefore,

2. Let us learn to imitate these two essential Attributes of God, his Justice and his Mercy, and transcribe them into our Lives and Conversations. We are com-
 Mat. 5. 48. *manded to be perfect as our Father*
 in

Sermon Second.

69

in Heaven is perfect, (i. e.) to come as near as possibly we can, and to imitate as far as in us lies, and the Frailty of our Beings will permit, those Perfections which discover themselves in the Divine Nature. For the most vital and substantial parts of the Christian Religion are, to be conversant in Works of Justice and Mercy, and to do as much Good in the World as possibly we can; for what doth the Lord require of us, Mich. 6. 8. *but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with our God? (i. e.) these are chiefly and principally required of us, with respect to Men, and are good Indications of our Devotion towards God. And in Truth, the Consideration of God's Justice and Mercy, is the strongest Motive imaginable to engage us to the Practice of a Holy Life; for since our Hopes and Fears*

are the two Hinges upon which all Human Actions turn, what can encourage our Hopes more than the Reflection on God's Mercy ? or what has a wicked Man more Reason to be afraid of, than the Justice of a provoked and incensed Deity ?

3. We may from hence learn to depend on God in all Conditions ; and having gained his Favour, and placed our selves under his Protection, to rest secure and unmoveable under all the various Changes and Chances of this Mortal Life. For 'tis not Fortune or Chance that governs the World, but *God that sits on the Throne.*

Pfal. 99. 1. The Lord reigneth, (says the Psalmist) let the Earth rejoyce, and let the Multitude of the Isles be glad.

'Tis our Security that his Providence watches over us, that the *Mat. 10. 30. very Hairs of our Head are all numbered ;*

Sermon Second.

71

bered ; and that a Sparrow cannot fall on the Ground without his Permission. He makes his *Angels ministering Spirits*, for the Guard of every good Man ; so that the Devil or his Instruments can do him no harm without God's Permission ; like *Job*, Job 1. 10. *he is hedged about on every side*, and secure under the Protection of the Almighty.

4. And lastly, How can we contemplate the *Rainbow about the Throne*, and the wonderful Mercies of God denoted by it, without breaking forth into Praise and Thanksgiving to that God, who has been so gracious and merciful to us. In the Second Book of *Samuel*, the 1. 18. *David* commands to teach the Children of *Israel* the Use of the Bow, (i. e.) several Psalms relating to the Victory of *Jonathan* over the Enemies of *Israel*, whose Bow returned not ^{2Sam. 1. 22.}

back from the Blood of the Slain ;
and therefore these *Psalms* are
called the *Bow* ; and certainly we
are oblig'd, both by Duty and
Gratitude, to be frequently Con-
ning these Lessons of Praise, and
by a Serious Consideration of this
Bow about the Throne, to raise up
in our Minds glorious *Idea's* of
God's Goodness and Mercy ;
which will naturally enlarge them-
selves into Praise and Adoration.
God's Covenant with Mankind,

Gen. 9. 9. *That he would no more destroy the*
World by a Deluge of Water, is
ratified to us by that *Bow* which
he has set in the Clouds, and made
the Sign of his Favour and Recon-
cilement to us, and deserves the
grateful Returns of Praise and A-
doration ; but that other Cove-
nant represented to us by *that Bow*
about the Throne, by which lost
Man is reconciled to God thro'
Christ,

Christ, can never be sufficiently magnified by the Tongues of Men and Angels. That the Eternal should become Mortal; he that was in the *Form of God*, should Phil. 2. 6, 7 take upon him the *Form of a Servant*; that the Judge of all the World should be impleaded at his own Bar, and be condemned by the Guilty; nay, that he should leave his *Throne* in Heaven, and enter into the Womb of a Woman; that the Prince of Life should be Nailed to the Cross, and suffer an Ignominious Death: These are the great Wonders which the Lord of Love has performed for us his Enemies, miserable Wretches, who have deserved nothing but his Scorn and Hatred. O Infinite Love! as wonderful as 'tis beneficial to us; a Love that surpasses Knowledge, and is as much above our Comprehension as Desert. In
natural

natural things, Admiration is the Effect of Ignorance ; but here 'tis increased by Knowledge ; for the more we understand of God's Goodness, the Strictness of his Justice, the Indulgence of his Mercy, and the Combination of all these in the great Work of Man's Redemption, together with the Unworthiness and Sinfulness of lost Man ; the more we shall be instructed to admire the Infinite Wisdom and Goodness of God in this wonderful Work. This is that stupendious and unutterable Instance of God's Mercy, which

1 Pet. 1. 12. *even the Angels desire to look into ; which they admire, but cannot comprehend, sound but cannot fathom ; and which, whilst they contemplate, Man enjoys. And*
 Rev. 5. 9. *therefore to him that sits on the Throne, who has Redeemed us to God by his own Blood, out of every*

Sermon Second.

75

*every Kindred, and Tongue, and
People, and Nation; and has made
us Kings and Priests unto God, be
all Honour, Glory, Praise, Power,
and Dominion, now and for ever,
Amen and Amen.*

The End of the Second Sermon.

28 JY 58

S E R-

2

22

Second Series

For the purpose of the present
series, the following have been
selected, and the following are
the names of the persons who
have been selected for the
present series.

The following are the names of the
persons who have been selected for
the present series.

The following are the names of the
persons who have been selected for
the present series.

The following are the names of the
persons who have been selected for
the present series.

The following are the names of the
persons who have been selected for
the present series.

B

on
of
T
fo
In
th
do
w
In

S E R M O N III.

Pfal. 72. 18.

*Blessed be the Lord God, the
God of Israel, who only
doth wondrous things.*

THese Words, with those which follow in the next Verse, are the Conclusion of the Prayers of *David*, (i.e.) of those Forms of Prayer and Thanksgiving which he composed for the Service of the Temple. In which, after he had celebrated the Praises of God for those wonderful Works which he had wrought in behalf of his peculiar Inheritance, the People of *Israel*
and

and *Judah*, Works of so signal a Nature, that the like were never performed in any Nation of the World ; he concludes with the Words of the Text : *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel who only doth wondrous things.*

In which Words, by *Wondrous things*, I understand *Miraculous Acts*, strictly so called, because God alone is said to perform them. 'Tis true, there are, and have been, many lying *Wonders* performed by the Devil and his Agents ; Actions which have appeared *wonderful* in Mens Eyes, and till nicely and critically examined, passed for Miracles, tho' they were not really so ; like the Images of the Sun, which are only his Figure and Representation on a Cloud. But a true *miraculous* Act can only be performed by the Great Creator and Governor
of

of the World, whose peculiar Prerogative it is to do *wondrous things*.

To make this more plain and evident,

I. I shall consider more distinctly the Nature of a Miracle.

II. I shall prove, that *miraculous Acts* have really been performed.

III. I shall shew in what Sense God alone may be said to perform them.

IV. By what means we may distinguish true *Miracles* from other *wondrous Works*.

V. From these Premises I shall infer some useful Conclusions.

I. I shall more distinctly consider the Nature of a *Miracle*. Now, tho' amongst Authors who have treated on this Subject, a wide Difference has been made between a *Wonder* and a *Miracle*; yet if
we

we consider it well, we shall find that a *Wonder* is only the more general Word, and a *Miracle* a more particular and special sort of Wonder ; for *Wonders* may be ranked under these three Heads ; Natural, Preter-natural, and Super-natural. A Natural *Wonder* is a strange Effect wrought by a Natural Cause, which raises our Admiration, only because we are ignorant how it was effected. A Preter-natural *Wonder* is an Effect seemingly produced by an Agent, which had not an inherent Power in it self, but received Assistance from some superiour Power, to perform it. A Super-natural *Wonder* is, when an Effect is brought about contrary to the established Laws of Nature, and exceeding the Power of any other Agent, but God alone. Now, the two last of these can only be termed

Mira-

Miracles ; the one in a more large, the other in a more strict and proper Sense. And that such *miraculous* Effects have been performed, is what I am secondly to make proof of ; and this will appear,

1. From the History of all Ages, both Sacred and Prophane. They all give Evidence to this Truth, that there have been many Effects wrought which surpassed the Power of those Agents who performed them. This has been affirmed not only by the Credulous Vulgar, or the Superstitious and Bigotted part of Mankind, or by one sort or party of Men ; but by the most Grave and Sober, the most Learned and Intelligent, the most Inquisitive and Sagacious, the most Honest and Vertuous, in all Places and in all Ages of the World. They have all agreed in

G

this

this Truth, That many *wonderful Works* have been done, which cannot be accounted for by the usual Laws of Matter and Motion; many stupendious Effects have been brought to pass, which must be performed by the Assistance of some superiour Power. And since some of them have exceeded the Efficacy of any second Cause, (such as the Conception and Resurrection of our Blessed Saviour, on which the Truth of the Christian Religion is built) we must have Recourse unto the first Cause of all things, if we would give any satisfactory Account of their Original. And therefore if there is any Truth in History, any Credit to be given either to the Records of past Times, or the Leaves of the Holy Writ, we must give our Assent to this Truth, which is so well attested; unless we can prove
that

that there is contained any plain Contradiction in the Proposition, and that our Reason tells us that 'tis a thing impossible that any *Miracle* should be wrought: But this I shall endeavour to disprove by shewing,

2. That 'tis highly agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, that there should be such Effects wrought in the World, as surpass the Skill and Power of any inferiour Agent, and must be attributed to the supreme and first Cause of all things. To confirm this, I propose these two Considerations:

1. That that infinitely Wise and Powerful Being, who made this World at first, and still preserves it from shrinking again into its primitive Nothing, can suspend, and alter the usual Course of things.

2. That there may be good Reasons assigned why he should sometimes do so.

1. That that infinitely Wise and Powerful Being, who at first made this World, and still preserves it, can suspend and alter the usual Course of things. And this is evident, because the same Word of his Power which produced all things out of nothing, and set them in this comely Order and beautiful Disposition, is sufficient to alter the usual Course of things, when he sees it fitting and convenient so to do. For it seems to require a more vigorous Exercise of his Power to Create this World, than it would do to perform any particular *Miracle*; Nay, the continual Preservation of the World, and the keeping up that Regularity of Motion and Uniformity, which we may observe in it, is
by

by far a greater Wonder than any particular Deviation from those Laws could be. We behold the *Sun like a Giant running his daily Course about the World*, and this we take little notice of, because 'tis usual and common; but when 'tis Eclipsed, then we wonder and gaze at it; but we should be much more surprized if we should discern it to stand still, or go back: But yet, if we consider it well, we shall find, that the regular Course of the Sun is the greater Wonder. And if so, then we have good Reason to conclude, that the same Almighty Arm which for so many Ages has maintained and kept up this regular Order and Course of things, can by the least Word of his Power suspend the Force of natural Agents, and divert their Influence into a different Channel, and

G 3 make

make them serve even to contrary Purposes than they were at first designed for, and intended : Especially considering,

2. That there may be many good Reasons assigned why he should do so.

1. It may please God to perform some wonderful and miraculous Acts, that hereby he might rouse up the more sottish and sensual part of Mankind. For when Men see that all things go on in a constant Course, and uninterrupted Succession, and continue in the same State they were in Time out of Mind, they may be apt to fancy that the World never had a Beginning, and that it will always continue in the same State it now is in : But when they behold the Course of Nature interrupted, and even inanimate Beings yielding Obedience to the All-powerful
Word

Word of their Great Creator ; this must needs surprize them into Wonder and Astonishment, and raise up their groveling Thoughts from this lower World, to the Contemplation of the first Mover of all things : They will look upon these ^{un}common and unaccountable Appearances as the Præadmonitions of decaying Nature, and the sure Fore-bodings of its final Dissolution. But,

2. The End of working *Miracles*, is generally to confirm some new Revelation of God's Mind and Will to Mankind. The great Lines of our Duty are indeed drawn upon the *Flesbly Tables of our Hearts* ; and Nature it self teaches us in a great measure what we ought to do, and what to avoid, and which are the essential Differences between Good and Evil ; But since the Reason of

Mankind is either so much blinded or byassed by its perverse Appetites and Passions, that it either mistakes, or wilfully perverts these first Notices of things; God has been pleased, out of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness, to renew these Impressions, to explain and make a Comment on this Original Text, and to give us a more intelligible and particular Direction how we ought to live and serve him, by a standing Revelation. And that we may assuredly know that this Revelation comes from God, he sets his Seal to it by these *σημεία* or Signs, these miraculous Operations and Effects, which evidently demonstrate to us, that the Revelation is from God, and that we ought to give our Assent to those Truths it discovers, and obey those Laws it imposes on us. And indeed this
seems

seems to be the chief End of *Miracles*, to give Evidence to those Truths which God is pleased to reveal to us, which are not to be discovered by the Light of Nature, or else are so darkly and confusedly represented to us, that they have need to be backt with other Motives and Inducements to ingage our Assent to them. And therefore *Miracles* have been chiefly wrought in three Ages of the World ; when the Law was at first given, when that Law was restored again, and when that Law which was thus founded upon *Miracles*, was to be abolished, and to give place to the Gospel. And in every one of these Periods of Time 'tis evident, that the End of performing *Miracles*, was to confirm some Revelation of God's Will, which could never be discovered, nor sufficiently warrant-
ed

ed by the Light of Nature. Nor ought we to forget,

Lastly, That by the working of *Miracles*, the ordinary Course of God's Actings, and the natural Order of Causes and Events, are rendred more glorious and illustrious in the Eyes of Men. There is nothing which makes Men value Health and Ease more than the being affected with Sicknes and Pain, nor are we ever so sensible of those Blessings we enjoy, as when our Wants instruct us. 'Tis Darknes which makes us prize the glorious Light of the Sun, and by the Tremblings and Convulsions of Nature, we become sensible how happy we are when things go on steadily in their due Order, and wonted Course: And therefore this may be one, tho' a less, principal End of the Performance of *Miracles*, to convince us, that
the

the preserving the World and our selves in being, the protecting us from Dangers, the giving us the Light of the Sun, and the Air we breathe in, are not such slight Favours, and so little to be regarded, as we are apt to fancy. For these and such like Ends it may possibly be accounted for, why God is pleased sometimes to unhinge Nature, and to divert the ordinary Course of Things, and to act contrary to the usual Methods, and the standing Laws of his Providence. And since by the Experience of past Ages, and the Verdict of so many Wise and Good Men, we find such Actions have been done; therefore I think we have good Reason to conclude, that there have been many true Miracles wrought; and that tho' for the most part, God having set all things in order, suffers them to
go

go on in an uninterrupted Succession, and governs the World by second Causes ; yet sometimes he is pleased to interpose, and to demonstrate to the World, that he is no idle Spectator of Human Affairs ; but when he sees fit takes the Reins into his own Hands : And tho' he seems to go out of the ordinary way, yet he guides and manages all things to some wise Ends, to the most universal Good, and best Advantage of those who faithfully serve him and obey his Commandments. Which brings me to shew,

III. In what Sense God alone may be said to do wondrous things. To which I answer,

I. That if we take *Miracles* in the larger Sense, for such Works as may be performed by Men, with the Assistance either of good
or

or evil Spirits ; then I affirm, that no such Work is done without the Permission of God. Evil Spirits are represented in the Holy Scripture as bound and restrained by Chains and Fetters ; they cannot exert the inherent Power which is in them, without God's Leave, nor could the Devil enter into the Swine of the *Gadarens* without God's Permission ; and even good Angels are *ministring Spirits* appointed by God, to protect, defend, and assist good Men, and to promote their Welfare.

2. If we take *Miracles* in a strict and proper Sense, for an Act in which the established Laws of Nature are suspended or altered ; 'tis beyond the inherent Power, either of good or bad Angels to perform them ; and in this Sense 'tis God alone who doth these

these *wondrous things*. For it requires the same Power to alter the Laws of Nature, which was requisite to establish them at the first ; and since the World was created by an Omnipotent Power, and by the same supported, preserved, and kept in order ; it will follow from hence, that none other but the same Almighty Being can dispense with, or alter those fundamental or established Laws by which it subsists. Besides, if either wicked Men, assisted by evil Spirits, or the Devils themselves, could work true and proper *Miracles*, (i. e.) such Works as are beyond the Sphere of their own Activity, then they must perform these Works by some Power delegated from God to them ; but 'tis very absurd to imagine, that God should communicate to the Devil any such Power

as

as this ; for this would be to intrust him with such a Power as would sink the Credit of all Revelation, and enervate the strongest Motives and Grounds for the Belief of all Religion ; by enabling him to confirm a false Religion with the strongest Arguments which can be made use of to establish the True. The Devil may indeed do many great *Wonders*, such as may amaze and astonish, and are beyond the Ability of Man to effect ; but to perform a true and *miraculous* Act, such as supposes an Infinite Power, is the sole Effect of an Omnipotent Arm. We are indeed ignorant of the utmost Extent of his Power, and how far the Sphere of his Activity reaches ; and we are told, that he can do such *wonderful* Works, which if it were possible, would deceive *the Elect of God* : Mat. 24. 24.

But

But yet this very Text supposes, that the Elect of God shall not be deceived; and that if a good and wise Man makes use of those Means and Helps which God has afforded him, he may not only be able to discover, but to defeat all his Devices. And therefore the People of *Israel* were commanded under the Law, that they should not hearken to any one who should entice them from the Wor-

Deut. 13. 1, ship of God, *tho' he should give*
 2. *them a Sign, and that Sign come to pass.* And, in Truth, this is the greatest Difficulty which perplexes this Doctrine of *Miracles*; for, may some say, if the Devil can do such great *Wonders*, if he can so cunningly ape and imitate these *miraculous* Acts, and counterfeit this Seal and Hand-writing of God, how is it possible that we should be assured who is the Author

thor of any *miraculous Act* ? and how can *Miracles* be a convincing Proof that any Revelation comes from God ? This would undermine the Certainty of Revelation, and by consequence the most fundamental Truths of the Christian Religion. For if the fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion are grounded on Revelation, and our Certainty of the Truth of Revelation depends on the Certainty of those *Miracles* which were wrought for the Confirmation of it, and there is no way left to discover a true *Miracle* from a pretended or counterfeited one ; then there is no way to discover whether a Revelation is from God or not. And therefore our great Business is to enquire,

IV. By what Means we may be able to discover a true and real

H *Miracle,*

Miracle, from one that is pretended or counterfeited; and to distinguish between those *wonderful Works* which are wrought by the Immediate Hand of God, or by the Ministry of good Angels; and those which are effected by the Power of the Devil. And for our Encouragement in this Enquiry, I shall premise; that 'tis reasonable there should be some such Means of distinguishing *Miracles*, and that 'tis highly agreeable to those Notions we have of God's Goodness and Wisdom, that there should be some plain Rules laid down, by which we should be able to distinguish Truth from Falsehood; especially in such fundamental Points as nearly concern our Salvation. For God has not left us to wander in the Dark, nor given us up to the Conduct of our bewildered Fancies, but has set up the Light of Reason

Reason in our Souls ; and where that is defective, has farther instructed us in the Knowledge of our Duty by Divine Revelation, and has omitted nothing which is absolutely requisite to lead us into all necessary Truth : Which Consideration may be sufficient to encourage us in the Pursuit of this useful, tho' difficult, enquiry. And,

1. Since every *Miracle* is an Appeal to our Senses, let us consider what Information our Senses, give us in this Affair. The Senses for the most part, do represent truly those Impressions which are made upon them, and where they are duly qualified, give us a true State of the Appearance of things : And therefore we find our blessed Saviour in the Gospel appealing to the Senses of Mankind, bidding his Hearers Judge of the Truth of his

Miracles by the Verdict of their
Mat. 11. 5. *Senses ; do not the Blind see, the*
Deaf hear, the Lame walk ? are
not the Dead raised to Life again ?
and by what Power can these
things be performed, but by the
Omnipotent Arm of God ? And
did not our Senses truly represent
those things which are objected to
them, there could be no Truth or
Certainty in the World. For since
our Knowledge of Material Be-
ings owes its Original to those
Impressions which are made upon
the External Senses ; if these Im-
pressions could be falsified and de-
luded, there could be no such
thing as Certainty in the World ;
and if we could have no Certain-
ty of the Objects we converse
with, we could never tell when
we do well, and when we do a-
miss : So that the Wisdom and
Goodness of God are ingaged to
establish

establish the Rectitude and Certainty of our External Sensations, and not to suffer them so to be deluded and imposed on ; but that a free and reasonable Agent, such as Man is, might have sufficient Motives and Inducements to determine its Choice to those things which conduce to its real Good and truest Interest. But because 'tis evident, that in some particular Cases the Senses may be imposed on ; therefore,

2. To the Assistance of our Senses, we ought to call in our Reason. First, to consider the Circumstances of every *wonderful Action*, and to weigh it by the known and experienced Maxims of Reason ; whether at this time, in this place, and in these Circumstances, there appears any Suspicion of Delusion ; whether the Action is placed in a true Light ;

ther its Cause is duly understood ; whether the Object is rightly apprehended, and whether the Sense is duly qualified ; and in short, whether all things requisite to form a right Apprehension of the Act do concur. Secondly, To consider the Nature of every *wonderful* and *miraculous* Act ; whether it was only a transient Act, or whether there was time allowed sufficient Nicely and critically to examine it ; whether there was any Notice given before the Performance of it ; or whether, being unexpectedly brought about, it was improved to deceive the credulous Vulgar ; whether it was sufficiently attested, and whether it exceeds the Power of any finite Agent. Thirdly, Let us consider the End and Reason why these *miraculous* Acts were wrought ; for if these *wonderful Works* are made use of, and chiefly

chiefly designed to promote some Temporal Interest, to raise the Reputation of those Persons who perform them, or to Arrest the Admiration and Wonder of the People, and to gratify their Curiosity, we have then Reason to suspect them ; or if they are wrought to confirm any pretended Revelation, which contradicts our natural Notions of Good and Evil, and runs counter to Natural Religion, or to such reasonable Conclusions as are plainly and evidently deduced from them ; we ought to judge them Delusive and Diabolical. But if they serve to establish a Doctrine which tends to promote Purity and Holiness, Vertue and Piety, which is built upon the Principles of Natural Religion, has the Suffrage of our Reason, and conduces to better and improve the Nature of Mankind,

and to render them more like God, and encourages to every good Work ; then are they to be lookt upon as proceeding from a good Being, and a Divine Original : Thus when the unbelieving *Jews* objected against the *Miracles* of our Blessed Saviour, that he performed them by the Power of some evil Spirit, and that *he cast out Devils by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils* ; our Saviour did not deny, that the Devil could perform such *seeming Miracles* and *wonderful Works* ; but he gives this Answer to this Blasphemous Objection, that 'twas very absurd and unreasonable to suppose it, because the End of performing those *Miracles*, was to establish a Doctrine which tended to subvert and destroy the Power of the Devil in the Souls of Men ; and that 'twas not reasonable to suppose that

that the Devil would give any Assistance, or afford any Help to fight against himself. These are the chief Marks and Criterions which God has given us to judge of *Miracles* by ; by which we may distinguish the true from the false, those which proceed from a good, and those which proceed from an evil Agent. But if any one should still insist that these Marks are not sufficient to detect some *lying Wonders* ; that the Power of the Devil is so great, his Malice so inveterate, his Subtilty so refined, that he can impose upon the best and wisest Men, and puts on the Guise and Appearance of an *Angel of Light*, when he designs the most exquisite Mischief ; I have only this to add, (if what I have already said will not give you Satisfaction) That tho' the Devil should be powerful and cunning enough

enough to deceive even the Elect of God, yet 'tis impossible he could do so, unless God gives him his Authority and Permission: And that God, who so affectionately desires the Good and Well-being of Mankind, will restrain the Malice, and put a Hook into the Nose of this furious Dragon; and will not suffer him to exert that inherent Power he is invested withal, any farther than shall consist with his Glory and Honour. And therefore there will always be some visible Mark, some plain Sign or other, whereby every good Man may discover the Delusions of the Devil, from the true and proper *miraculous Acts* of God. Every humble and good Man may depend upon God's Care and Protection, *who will not suffer him to be tempted above what he is able to bear, nor intangle him in inextricable*

1 Cor. 10.
13.

cable Difficulties, or cast him into such Perplexities as he cannot free himself from ; but will with the Temptation make a way for him to escape. This is a Notion becoming that Great and Good Father of the World, who built this universal Frame that he might communicate Happiness to all Capacities of Beings, as well as to advance his own Glory. And therefore, reposing my Confidence on this *Rock of Ages*, and taking him for my Defence against all the Assaults and Delusions of the Devil, I am well assured, that if I Jam. 4. 17. thus resist him, he will flee from me ; and that the Gates of Hell Mat. 16. 18. shall not prevail against me. And therefore I shall dismiss this Argument, and proceed,

V. To consider what practical Inferences may be drawn from these Premises. And,

1. Let

1. Let us learn to admire the wonderful Power of God, and to adore his glorious Majesty, who has not only created this visible World out of Nothing, but still preserves and governs it, who sets Bounds to Inanimate as well as to Animate and Reasonable Beings which they cannot pass, unless dispensed with, or commanded by their Great Creator and Governor. 'Tis evident, that he governs the World with a Providential Influence and Fatherly Care, because he sometimes interposes; either by suspending the Force of natural Agents, or commanding them to act contrary to their innate Dispositions and the Propensions of their Natures, when the Good of the Universe requires it.

2. Let us not depend on any extraordinary or *miraculous* Assistance

stance from Heaven, when the ordinary Means is sufficient ; for since every *Miracle* is an Effect wrought contrary to the usual Course of things, we ought not to expect that God should act after so extraordinary a manner, but only at such Times, and in such Cases where the ordinary Means is not sufficient to bring about the Ends of his Providence.

*Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit* —

And therefore those Persons are guilty of a very heinous Offence against God, who first fancy themselves the Elect of God, and principal Favourites of Heaven ; and then expect that at every turn, and in the most trifling Concerns, God should make bare his Arm in their Defence, and work a *Miracle* as often as they are pleased
to

to call for it. But this is contrary to the usual Course of God's Dealings with Mankind, who for the most part leaves things to second Causes, and generally it happens alike in this World to the

Eccl. 9. 1. Good as to the Bad ; and there is no knowing Love or Hatred by all that is before us, (i.e.) we cannot tell whether God loves or hates a Man by all that befalls him in this Life. Afflictions are many times the Signs of his Love, and the good things of this World bring along with them the greatest Curses which can befall some Men.

*Evertere Domos totas optantibus ipsis
Dii faciles -----*

And therefore even the best Men, and the most beloved Children of God, ought to be content when things flow in their usual Channel,
and

Sermon Third.

III

and God doth not see fit to interrupt them. For should God always ^{after} a *miraculous* manner interpose in the behalf of good Men when they desire it, the World had been so full of *Miracles*, that the ordinary Course of Nature would hardly have been discerned; and the Commonness of those *wonderful Works* would have frustrated the true Use of them: And should God never perform any *Miracle*, but suffer all things to go on orderly, and in a regular Course; Men would not believe there was a Providence and a God. And therefore God has taken such Measures in the Government of the World, that both his Wisdom and his Power may appear; his Wisdom in contriving all things in a regular, beautiful, and becoming Order; his Power by interrupting this Order, and inverting the
the

the ordinary Course of things, when in some extraordinary Cases and unusual Emergencies 'tis requisite so to do.

3. Hence good and vertuous Men may learn to repose their Trust and Confidence in God, in all Exigencies and Distress. For what tho' he should expose them to Calamities and Afflictions, to Dangers and Temptations; yet he can deliver them out of all their Troubles when he sees it for their Good and Advantage; nay, he can unhinge Nature, and work a *Miracle* on their behalf, rather than he will suffer those *little Ones* who put their Trust in him, to perish for want of his Fatherly Help and Divine Assistance. And as he is able, so we are assured he will protect those who put their Trust in him; he has promised to be *their Shield and Defence* against
all

all their Enemies, and neither the Power of Men or Devils shall be able to harm them, who have put themselves under his Protection; for *under the Shadow of his Wings* Psal. 91. 1. *they shall dwell in Safety.*

Lastly, From what has been said, it will appear, that many powerful Obligations lye upon every one of us, to yield a punctual Obedience to all the Commands of God. For shall every part of the Universe hearken to the Voice of God, and fulfil his Commands, and shall Man alone, on whom God has conferred his choicest Favours, and such excellent Gifts, shew himself a perverse Child, and a rebellious Subject? Shall the Heavens and Earth, and all Inanimate Beings bow at his Word, and shall Mankind continue stubborn and refractory? Shall the raging Sea grow smooth, and

I the

Judg. 14.
14.

the stormy Wind calm, and the Fire forget its natural Force, and suspend its Heat? *Shall the Eater bring forth Meat, and the Strong Sweetness*, when God requires it? and shall Man perform such Actions as are unbecoming that Rank of Beings which he holds in the World, break the Laws and transgress the Commands of that God who is the Great Creator and Governor of us all? This is certainly the most unaccountable Folly and Extravagance imaginable.

Let us therefore yield a steady, constant, and universal Obedience to the Laws of our God; let us admire his Majesty and Power, adore his Goodness, give up ourselves and all our Concerns to be guided by his Providence; that by Living thus in his Fear, we may Die in his Favour, and obtain

Sermon Third.

115

tain eternal Salvation in the Life
to come ; which God of his Mer-
cy grant, for the Sake of *Jesus*
Christ, our blessed Lord and Re-
deemer. *Amen.*

The End of the Third Sermon.

: 28 JY 58

I 2

S E R

tain eternal salvation in the life
 to come which God of his
 grace for the sake of Jesus
 Christ our blessed Lord and Re-
 deemer Amen

The End of the First Sermon.
 1738

S E R M O N IV.

Job 33. 14, 15, 16.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not. In a Dream, in a Vision of the Night, when deep Sleep falleth upon Men, in Slumberings upon the Bed ; then he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction.

TH E Design of these Words, and of part of this Chapter, is, to display God's wonderful Patience and

Forbearance with Mankind, and the various Methods he makes use of to withdraw them from their Sins ; amongst which this is one, the admonishing them by Heavenly *Dreams* and *Visions*, awakening their Minds with Holy and Devout Thoughts, and representing to their Imaginations the Images and Patterns of Heavenly things. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet Man perceiveth it not, in a *Dream*, in a *Vision of the Night* ---

That I may render these Words the more intelligible, I shall inquire into the Sense of these following Expressions.

I. What is meant by *God's speaking once, yea twice.*

II. What by a *Dream* and a *Vision of the Night*, and *Slumberings upon the Bed.*

III. What by *opening the Ears of Men.*

IV. What

IV. What by *sealing their Instruction.*

I. What is meant by *God's speaking once, yea twice.* The Import of this Expression seems to be this. *Job* had complained in a former Discourse, that God did not return an Answer to his Prayers, or regard his Expostulations; Behold *I go forward*, (says he) Chap. 23. 8. *but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceiue him; on the Left Hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the Right Hand, that I cannot see him.* To whom his Friend *Elihu* replies, and endeavours to shew him his Mistake, that God did return an Answer, tho' he did not perceive and understand it; for tho' God doth not speak to Man Face to Face, yet he has several other ways of

answering him ; and he must blame his own Dullness and Stupidity, if he doth not apprehend him. For first God speaks to Mankind in all the Dispensations of his Providence, and 'tis their Duty to attend to this Voice of his, and to consider what 'tis he says unto them. Every Condition of Life, every State we can happen into, calls for the Exercise of some peculiar Graces and Vertues which are appropriated to it. We ought to open our Ears when he calls upon us by the Voice of Affliction, to take a Review of our Lives, and to Exercise the Duties of Repentance and Reformation. We ought to hearken diligently, when by giving us Success, and placing us in a prosperous Condition, he awakens our Gratitude and Thankfulness. But besides this general Language of God's Provi-

Providence, *Elihu* instances in two other ways, which God makes use of, to reclaim Men from their Errors, and to discover his Mind and Will to them ; the one mentioned in the Text by *Dreams* and *Visions of the Night*, putting them in mind of their past Actions, reproving them for their Sins, and filling their Souls with Horror and Amazement : The other by the Ministry of his Preachers, speaking to them out of his Holy Word, searching their Consciences, and laying their Sins open before their Eyes, Vers. 23. of this Chapter. *If there be a Messenger with him, an Interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto Man his Righteousness, &c. ---* And these ways of God's Reasoning with Mankind, are not only made use of now and then, in some single and rare Instances, but frequently repeated ;

ed : God gives Men *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept, here a little and there a little ; he speaks once, yea twice, (i. e.)* he frequently makes use of these Ways and Methods of rousing Mankind, and awakening them out of that deep Sleep of Sin and Carnal Security, into which they are fallen ; he *speaketh once*, by sending some grievous Affliction and Calamity upon them ; he repeats the same Lesson out of the Mouth of his Ministers, exhorting, perswading, and intreating Men to leave off their wicked Doings, to repent of their Sins, and to be reconciled unto him : And because Men will not understand the Language of God's Providence, and too frequently turn their Backs upon God's Holy Ordinances, and will not give an attentive Ear to the Voice of his Ministers, but
cast

cast off the Fear of the Lord, and will not have any Knowledge of his Ways ; and divert all Religious and Serious Thoughts, either by Wine, or Business, or Carnal Pleasure : Therefore God comes unto them as he did unto *Adam* in Paradise, in the Cool of the Day, Gen. 3, 8. whilst they lye thoughtful upon their Beds, when their Minds are free from the Cares and Hurry of the World, the Storms of their Passions, and the Clouds of sensual Pleasure ; then he brings into their Thoughts the past Follies of their Lives, he reasons the Case with them ; then he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction. This is the Meaning of God's speaking once, yea twice. I come to shew,

II. What is meant by a *Dream*, what by *Visions of the Night*, and what

what by *Slumberings upon the Bed*. Some Interpreters there are, who distinguish between *Dreams* and *Night-Visions*, and look upon these as different ways by which God speaks or reasons with Men. A *Dream* (say they) is when the Phancy or Imagination represents something to a Man in his Sleep, which has no real Existence, but disappears as soon as ever he opens his Eyes; and these are of two sorts, either such as naturally happen to Men, when they are as it were between sleep and awake, (as we usually say) or, as the Text expresses it, *Slumbering upon their Bed*: For when the Senses are not fast lock'd up, when only a thin vail of fumes and vapours is spread over the active Faculties of the Soul; the Imaginative faculty has more liberty to act, and by joyning those Images treasured up in the Memory,

ry, makes a thousand incoherent and absurd Representations of things ; and from hence proceed most of those *Dreams*, which so frequently entertain us in our Beds : Or else Extraordinary and Divine *Dreams*, when deep sleep falleth upon Men, (i. e.) when an extraordinary sleepiness and drowsiness seizes upon them without any natural cause, when they are possessed with an unusual fear and horror, and fall as it were into a Trance, and have some extraordinary thing represented to them ; these are those *Divine Dreams*, which were so usual and familiar under the old Testament, thus we read, *Gen. 15. 2.* that when the Sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. And in the 4 Chap. of *Job*, the 12, and following verses, *Eliphaz* relates this account. A thing

was

was secretly brought unto me, and mine ear received a little thereof, in thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men; fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake, then a Spirit passed before my face. But a Vision, say they, is represented to Men when they are awake, of which we have various Instances in the holy Scripture, Dan. 5. 5. we read that when Belshazzar made a great feast, whilst he and his Princes were carousing in the vessels of the Sanctuary, and praising the Gods of Gold and Silver, of Brasse, of Iron, of Wood and of Stone. In the same hour came out fingers of a mans hand and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the Kings Palace, and the King saw part of the hand that wrote. And thus Balaam describes those visions in which God communicated his mind and will

will unto him, Numb. 24. 3. And he took up his Parable and said, Balaam the Son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said : he hath said which heard the Words of God, which saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance, but having his eyes open. So that the plain difference between a Vision and a Dream (according to these Interpreters) is this; that in a Vision the Object is represented to the external senses, and something is either plainly seen or heard; but in a Dream there is only some motion made, or effect wrought upon the Imagination, some impression made upon the Phancy; and this distinction between Divine Dreams and Visions is founded upon several Texts of the holy Scripture. In the 2 Chap. of the Prophecy of the Prophet Joel, v. 28. 'tis said that their old Men should dream

dream Dreams, and their young Men should see Visions. And God gave to Daniel the understanding of Dreams and Visions. And Numb. 12.6. the Lord said, if there be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make my self known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. From whence some Commentators conclude, the Inspired writers do make a difference between *Visions and divine Dreams*; which tho' it carries great shew of probability, yet there are others who think these words are us'd promiscuously by the Pen-men of the holy Text, and generally taken one for the other; and that a *Dream* and a *Night Vision* in the Text are both words of the same import, and expressions made use of to denote the same thing. In the Text (say they) there is an Instance of one of those ways by which God speaks unto Men,

Men, which is ⁶a *Dream* or a *Night Vision*, when Men fall into a deep sleep, or lie on their Beds between sleeping and waking; then (when their Minds are free from the business of the day) he secretly whispers Instruction into their Ears, and imprints it upon their Minds; not to make them understand all the secret Reasons of his Providence, but to turn Man from his evil ways, and to dispose him with all Humility to submit himself to his Heavenly Instructions; as the Words are Paraphrased by a pious and learned Father of the Church. And this Interpretation is confirm'd from hence, that presently after mention of a *Vision of the Night*, 'tis added, *when deep sleep falleth upon Men*. Now a *Vision* properly so called, is represented to Men when they are awake; and therefore by a *Vision of the Night* in the Text,

K

may

may with great probability be intended a *Dream*, whether Divine or Human. I proceed to shew,

III. What is meant by *opening the Ears of Men*. The Expression is a *Hebraism*, by which is denoted the raising Mens Attention, that they may mark and consider things more seriously, and make a deeper Impression upon their Memories, and the inviting them to weigh and deliberate upon such things as are presented to their Consideration. 'Tis natural for Wonder and Astonishment to rouse up the Attention and fix the Thoughts; and 'tis one end of those Divine *Dreams* and *Visions*, to awaken Men from the sleep of carnal security and Sin, to call to their Minds their past Actions, and to give an ear to the Dictates of right Reason. For as stopping the Ear, or turning
ing

ing a deaf Ear to good Admonitions and Reproof, is a sign of the greatest Obduracy and Impenitency ; a Man not being in a Capacity of being convinced by the most powerful Arguments and Demonstrations, or the most persuasive Rhetorick, who will not hearken unto it : So to *open the Ear*, is a Sign of a pliable and teachable Disposition, that Men are willing to learn, and as the Apostle expresses it, *Swift to hear*, and desirous to understand and perform their Duty ; and when God *opens Mens Ears*, he renders them inclinable to hearken to, to mark, and inwardly digest those Truths which are delivered to them, and *sealeth their Instruction*. The meaning of which Expression, is in the last place to be inquired into ; which also at first sight, appears to be a *Hebraism*,

the Translation of the holy Bible, keeping up to the very Letter of the *Hebrew* Text; and thus 'tis renderd in the *Tigurine* Translation, which comes up to the Sense of the Original, and contains the full Import of this Expression. *Disciplinam eorum velut impresso sigillo obsignat.* For by this way of teaching by *Dreams* and *Visions*, God doth not only open their *Ears*, and rouse up their Attention; but he makes a deeper impression than ordinary upon their Memories, he places them as in a safe repository, and seals them up as Men do those things which they would keep safe, and perpetuate the Memory of : There is another Exposition of these Words, which seems to me very probable, that by *Sealing Mens Instruction*, may be meant that Divine Light, by which God assured the Prophets of old, that those *Visions* which

which they saw, and those *Dreams* which were represented to them, were not the Illusions of Evil Spirits, nor the effects of a heated Imagination, nor the sports of Phancy, but the extraordinary Efforts of a Divine and supernatural Cause; and then the meaning of *sealing their Instruction* will be this, that God by supernatural *Dreams* and *Visions*, doth not only awaken Mens attention, counsel, advise, and direct them to act aright; but he sets to his Seal, confirms them in the Belief, and begets in their Minds a firm assurance and perswasion, that 'tis God who thus advises and instructs them, and that they are not deluded by an Evil Spirit. How the Prophets of Old were thus assured, we know no more, than the Manner how other miraculous Effects were wrought; but 'twas absolutely

necessary that there should be some Means or other, whereby they might certainly distinguish these *Divine Dreams* from ordinary and natural ones ; and that they should be well assured from what Author they derived their Original. And now, having endeavoured to make plain the literal Interpretation of those difficult Phrases made use of in the Text, I shall prosecute the main Intendment of them, by shewing,

I. That in the first Ages of the World 'twas usual for God to speak and discover his Mind and Will, to Men in *Dreams* and *Visions*.

II. That we under the Gospel have no Reason to expect that God should discover his Will to us by such extraordinary Revelations.

III. That

III. That even in our Times, Holy Thoughts and Divine Directions may be, and frequently are, inspired into us in *Slumbrings* and *Dreams*, and whilst we muse upon our Beds, by the Ministry of good Angels.

Lastly, I shall make some useful Improvement of these Propositions, and so conclude.

I. That in the first Ages of the World God frequently discovered his Mind and Will to Men in *Dreams* and *Visions*, after an extraordinary and peculiar manner. This Book of *Job* is thought to be the most ancient in the *Old Testament*, and tho' 'tis lookt upon by some rather as a Divine Poem than a real History, yet in it the ancient Usages and Dispensations of God towards Mankind are plainly visible. In the first Ages

of the World God conversed with Men by the Ministry of his Holy Angels, who assumed a visible Shape, and appeared frequently in the World ; and this was in some measure necessary, because they had then no other Guide than the Light of Nature ; which being darkened and obscured by the Transgression of our first Parents, and bent to that which is evil, it was necessary for the keeping up a Sense of God and his Worship in the World, to make some extraordinary Manifestations of himself. And besides, having determined to send his only begotten Son into the World, and in the Fullness of Time to Redeem Mankind from his lost and miserable Condition ; he did not think fit to let this glorious Light appear all of a sudden, but prepared his way for him by many previous Manife-

Manifestations of himself. The glorious Incarnation of our blessed Saviour, that Great Work of God's Wisdom and Power, was at first represented by Types and Figures, afterwards more plainly Prophefied of, and by degrees revealed to Mankind, that it might be more easily embraced and readily entertained by them. For such Ends as these, in the beginning of the World, God frequently manifested himself in *Dreams* and *Visions*, by an audible Voice, or some visible Appearance; but when Mankind had taken occasion from these Instances of God's Condescension and Goodness, to abuse his Mercies to Wantonness and Idolatry, and fell from the Worship of the only true God, to the Adoration of Angels, and the Ghosts of their deceased Princes and Benefactors; God saw it fit to deliver his Mind
and

and Will in Writing, to be the standing Rule of Mens Lives and Actions. And when the Law was once committed to Writing, *Visions* and *Revelations* began to cease, and the extraordinary Manifestations of God's Mind were less frequent; for tho' they continued in the Church, not only under the Law, but also in the first Ages of Christianity, before the Gospels were written and promulged over the World, yet was their Authority much lessened, and the Truth of their Revelation resolved into its Agreement with the written Word of God. After the Law was once delivered, the Rule was to the Law and to the Testimonies, and therefore the Children of *Israel* were forewarned and commanded, that *if there should arise among them a Prophet or a Dreamer of Dreams, and give them*

Deut. 13.
1, 2, 3.

a Sign or a Wonder, and the Sign or the Wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto them, saying, Let us go after other Gods, which they had not known, and serve them; that they should not hearken to the Words of that Prophet, or that Dreamer of Dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul. And when our Saviour Christ came into the World, and fully and plainly declared the whole Will of God to Mankind, then all those extraordinary ways of Gods manifesting himself to Mankind ceased, and were at an end. Which brings me to shew,

II. That since God has revealed his Will in the Holy Gospel, we have no Reason to expect that God should manifest himself unto us after so extraordinary a manner,

ner, as will appear from these two plain Reasons : 1. Because 'tis contrary to the Rules and Methods of God's Providence, to make use of any extraordinary Means, when the ordinary Means are sufficient to accomplish the Effect. And 2. In all Probability they would be to no purpose ; for we have now *a more sure Word of Testimony* ; the written Word of God is a plain and infallible Rule, and if Men will not be convinced by it, 'tis not probable that they would be wrought on, tho' one should be raised from the Dead on purpose to preach to them, and to convince them of their Error. *Visions and Revelations* would indeed startle us, and at the first amaze and terrify us ; but such a Surprise would soon wear off, and wicked Men would find some way or other to evade the Force of them.

them. These are like Night-Meteors, which dazle our Eyes, and soon disappear; but the Word of God is like the Sun in the Firmament, which will yield a steady and durable Light for us to walk by. But yet, tho' now under the Gospel, we have no Reason to expect Divine *Visions*, or any extraordinary Illuminations, or other Revelations of God's Will, than he has laid down in his Holy Word; yet,

III. This is no Bar but that in an ordinary and natural way, Holy Thoughts and Divine Directions may be inspired into us; God doth still speak to us *in Slumbrings upon the Bed*, and when we give our selves Liberty to think; when our Passions are calm, our Heads cool, and our Hearts fit to receive these Holy Impressions, God rea-
sons

sons with us, shews us the Folly of our evil Courses, and that the most wise and prudent Method we can take, is, to reform our Ways, and amend our Lives. Nay, I see no Reason to deny, that in some extraordinary Cases Men may still be admonished in a *Dream*, of some imminent Danger, or some other Matter of Importance, which they could not otherwise be sufficiently advertised of. For Histories of all Ages furnish us with so many Instances of this nature, that it would shake the Credit of all History in general, if we should disbelieve them : And that Person may be probably suspected to deny the Existence of Angels and Spirits, who will not acknowledge their continual Attendance and Influence, upon the Actions of Mankind. 'Tis plain even from the Holy Scriptures, that as it is the
Em-

Employment of evil Angels to suggest evil Thoughts, and to beguile in our Souls sensual Lusts, inordinate Passions, and irregular Desires, to fill our Imaginations with such Images as promote sensual Desires and Affections: So it is the Charge of Good Angels, to drive away these impure Birds which pollute the Holy Temple of God; I mean those Sinful Thoughts which defile the Soul; and to kindle in our Hearts Good Desires, to inflame our Souls with a Holy Zeal, and by all wise and probable Means, to promote and help forward the great Work of Man's Salvation. The Angels are ministering Spirits, and have the Charge of every good Man committed to them. And tho' I do not confine this Office to two Guardian Angels, who have the peculiar care of every particular Person, (as
the

the Papists do) because I have no Warrant for it from the Holy Scripture : Yet this we may be assured of, that every good Man is under their peculiar Care and Inspection, that they are continually performing good Offices to his Soul ; he is by them continually incited to do Good, restrained from doing Evil, rescued from the Snares of the Devil, and delivered out of many apparent Hazards and Dangers, thro' their Ministration ; these are the Guards which God has set about his Bed, and about his Path, which watch over him whilst he Wakes, and protect him whilst he Sleeps ; they purge his Fancy from impure Dreams and Imaginations, and instill Holy and Devout Thoughts into his Mind, whilst he lies musing on his Bed, and frequently admonish him in *Dreams and Visions of the Night* ;
Not

Not that there is any extraordinary Discovery of God's Mind and Will in those *Dreams*, which was not manifested before, or new Light revealed which we ought to walk by, or do they inform us of the secret Reasons of God's Providence ; all that we ought to know of these things, is contained in the written Word of God ; and to this 'tis our Duty to give heed ; but as we are told in the Verses following the Text, *That he may withdraw Man from his Purpose, and hide Pride from Man : He keepeth back his Soul from the Pit, and his Life from perishing by the Sword*, (i. e.) to admonish them of the neglect of some known Duty, to bring them to a nearer Conformity with his Will contained in the *Holy Bible*, or sometimes to forewarn them of some imminent Danger ; for there is certainly an

L

im-

invisible World of Angels and Spirits, which continually surround and attend upon us, tho' we do not perceive them; and to their Ministration we must impute not only the great Revolutions of Governments, the Rise and Fall of Kingdoms; but also much of that Good and Evil which befalls particular Persons: They are the Instruments by which God inflicts his Judgments, and bestows his Blessings upon the Sons of Men. This being laid down; I come

Lastly, To make some useful Improvement of what has been said. And,

I. From what has been already said, it will appear, that there is no great heed to be given to our ordinary *Dreams*; for the most part they are nothing else but the incoherent and disjointed Images of those things

things we have received into the Phancy by the Senses, and treasured up in our Memories when we were awake: And we may as reasonably hope to find exact and curious Pictures drawn in the Clouds, as any Truth and Certainty in these *Dreams*. And yet such is our Folly and Superstition, that we will be continually spelling the Councils of the Almighty in these antick and insignificant Characters; and phancy the Product of our distempered Imaginations, to be the Dictates of the Holy Spirit, and the Oracles of God. There is nothing more vain and foolish than our ordinary *Dreams*, except it be those Persons who are nicely and curiously exact in the Observation of them, and look upon them as the Hand and Index, which is to point out to them what is to come to pass.

Sermon Fourth.

And in Truth, this is so slight and trifling a Subject, that 'twere not fit to be mentioned in a Sermon or serious Discourse, were not the Generality of Mankind so superstitiously given to the Observation of them. How this piece of Enthusiasm came to obtain so universally, is no difficult Matter to determine; for in the first Ages of the World God made use of this way to reveal himself to Mankind; and then the Devil, who loves to ape God in his Worship, took up this Method of giving his Oracles, and instituted this Custom as a Sacred Rite; that Men should sleep in the Temples of his Idols when they came to inquire any thing of them: And Answers were given to them in *Dreams* and *Night-Visions*. And therefore we may justly conclude, that the nice and curious Observation of *Dreams*, is
not

not only Unreasonable and Superstitious, but Heathenish also: And if the curious Observation of ordinary *Dreams* is so sinful; then it follows,

2. That we ought not to publish our own Phancies and Imaginations, for Divine *Visions* and Inspirations, and the Revelations of the Holy Spirit. How frequent has it been in these last Ages, for Men not only to be deluded themselves, but to seduce others also; to set up for inspired Persons and new Prophets by the Help of an heated Imagination? And in Truth, what is all that *Enthusiasm* which so much reigns amongst us, but the *Dreams* of those Persons, whose vitiated Imagination depraves their Judgments? We have too many who make great Pretences to a *new Light within them*, which will

guide them into all Truth, teach them what they ought to believe, and what to do, without the Help of the *Holy Scripture*. Others there are who are assured by no less Testimony than that of the *Holy Spirit*, that they are the Children of God, and of the Number of the Elect, tho' their Works testify against them, that they are the Children of the Devil. What are these but the Efforts of a distempered Phancy, the waking *Dreams* of poor deluded Men, who first take a great deal of Pains to deceive themselves, and then double their Diligence to impose upon others? Let me speak to them in the Words of *Maimonides*; *Hic vero monendus es* --- There are (says he) some who by the Help of an over heated Imagination, have such strange Phancies, Dreams and Extasies, that they take themselves for
for

for Prophets, and much wonder that they have such Phancies and Imaginations; conceiting at last, that all Sciences and Faculties are infused into them without any Pains or Study. And hence it is that they fall into many odd Opinions, in many speculative Points of no great moment, and do so mix true Notions with such as are seemingly and imaginarily so, as if Heaven and Earth were jumbled together. All which proceeds from the too great Force of the Imaginative Faculty, and the Imbecility of the Rational. Thus he. This Delusion then in the Sense of this Excellent Writer, concerning those Enthusiasts who pretend to Revelation, arises from hence; that their Phancies are invigorated and impregnated, but their Reason is not informed, nor their Understandings possessed with a true

sense of things in their due coherence and contexture, and therefore they are so apt to embrace things contrary to all true sense and sober Reason. The best Remedy against this dangerous and too Epidemical disease of this Nation, is to take up all our Opinions, and to govern all our Actions, by the written Word of God; for it is a gross piece of folly and madness, to seek after new Lights and Revelations, when God himself hath told us, that his Word shall be *a light to our feet, and a lantern to our paths*, sufficient to guide us into all truth. This is the Touch-stone by which we ought to trie all new Lights and pretended Revelations, all such Doctrines and Practices as bear the Face of venerable Antiquity, or agreeable Novelty. If they do not agree with this, if they run counter in any point to these *lively Oracles*,

Pf. 119.
105.

Oracles, tis only Error and Vice, under the guise and appearance of Vertue and Truth. God speaks to us indeed in *Dreams* and *Visions* of the Night, and *slumbrings* on the Bed, but tis not to discover any new and unrevealed Truth, to make any additional Discovery of his Will, but only to rouse up our Minds, and awaken our Attention, and put us upon the practice of those Duties, and the belief of those Articles, which have been so frequently inculcated into us, and written in the Volume of this Holy Book; and therefore,

Lastly, How careful ought we to be to give an attentive Ear to these Divine Admonitions, and to cherish these holy Inspirations; for since God has left off speaking to Men in *Dreams* and *Visions*, and converses with us now in a *still Voice*; suggesting to our Minds
good

good Thoughts, Inspiring our Souls with holy Desires and Affections, and by his Grace inciting and quickening us to do good, and reprov-
 ing us when we do amiss, leading us into the right way, and exhorting us to persevere in it : It must certainly be our unquestionable Duty and truest Interest, to comply with these holy Inspirations ; to dispose our selves for the receiving of them, by furnishing our Minds with suitable Dispositions and Qualifications, by an attentive regard to whatsoever he speaks to us, and an humble Submission to every thing which becomes our duty. For shall God speak to us, and shall not Man hear ? Shall we not say with *Samuel*, *Speak Lord for thy servant heareth* ? And yet how frequently do we turn a deaf Ear to these Admonitions ? And tho' God speaks once, yea twice, yet we re-
 gard

1 Sam. 3. 9.

gard it not? Who is there that has not heard God speak to him by voice of Affliction, and the awakening dispensations of his Providence, by the voice of his Ministers, and the Inspirations of his holy Spirit? And yet all these Admonitions have not been sufficient to work his Reformation and Amendment. There are none of us but have been frequently warn'd *to flee* Mat. 3. 7. *from the wrath to come*; whilst we ly musing on our Beds, and calling to mind the past actions of our lives. Is there not a Voice within us which either accuses or excuses us? which represents to us the reasonableness of a Holy, Just, and good life, and the folly and madness of being vicious and wicked, and what dangerous effects Sin doth continually produce? And if so, how reasonable is it, that we should hearken to this heavenly Monitor?

That

That we should weigh and consider what he dictates to us, and resolve to perform whatsoever we are assured will conduce to our truest Interest both here and hereafter? Which that we may all of us do, God of his Mercy grant for Jesus Christ his sake.

28 JY 58

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

S E R.

S E R M O N V.

Gen. i. 27. *So God created man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him, male and female created he them.*

THE whole Body of Divinity is by some excellent Writers divided into these two parts, the Knowledge of God, and of our Selves; both which mutually depend one upon the other: For the only way to know God, (*i. e.*) to come to any certain Knowledge of those Perfections which are in the Divine Nature, is to con-tem-

template those shadows of them we discover in our selves, which naturally flow from reasonable Beings, and are only the Transcripts of that Original Copy; some Streams imparted to us from the Source and Fountain of all Good: and the best way to come to the Knowledge of our selves, both as to that happy and blessed state in which God created us, and that lost and miserable Condition to which we have reduc'd our selves; is the Contemplation of the first Cause, that being of infinite Holiness, Power, and Goodness, after whose Image and likeness we were at first created. *For God Created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him, male and female created he them.*

In my Discourse upon these Words; I shall do these three things. 1. I

1. I shall shew what is meant by Gods creating Man after his own Image.

2. Wherein this Image of God in Man doth consist.

3. What useful Inferences may be drawn from the Contemplation of Gods Image in Man.

1. What is meant by Gods creating Man after his own Image. The Words in the Original, which are both translated *Image*, are in the Vulgar Latine rendred by two Words, the one signifying an *Image*, the other a *Similitude*; between which *Bellarmino*, and those of the *Romish Church*, who follow him, make this difference; that an *Image* consists in natural Endowments, *Similitude* relates to supernatural Graces. But this distinction is not built on the Foundation of any sound Reasoning: For the Words are promiscuously used

used in other Texts of the holy Scripture, without any such distinction, as Gen. 5. 3. *And Adam liv'd an hundred and thirty years, and begat a Son in his own likeness, after his Image.* Sometimes there is only mention made of one of them, as Gen. 9. 6. *In the Image of God made he Man,* and Gen. 5. 1. *In the likeness of God made he him,* and sometimes they are both put together, as in the Text, but then there is no real ground for a Distinction, and they are only used by a Rhetorical and Figurative way of speaking, more earnestly to inculcate the same thing; so that the meaning of these Phrases, *That God created Man in his own likeness, or his own similitude,* is plainly this: That Man was created like God, in respect of some peculiar Excellencies and Properties; that he had this advantage over his fellow Creatures,

tures, that he was ennobled with some Endowments in which he resembled God, and bore the Character of his Maker ; but since it is not agreed on amongst the Antient Fathers of the Church, much less amongst the Modern Interpreters of holy Writ, what this *Image*, and *Resemblance of God in Man* was, I shall make it the subject of my next enquiry to consider

2. Wherein this *Image of God* in Man did consist.

In order to perform this I shall shew

1. What variety of Opinions there are amongst Antient and Modern Authors concerning this Point.

2. That the *Image of God in Man* is not to be found in any particular Excellency or Perfection.

3. That to form an adequate Notion of this *Image of God*, we
M must

must take in all those Perfections in which Man excels the inferiour part of the Creation, and bears any Resemblance to his Maker.

1. What variety of Opinions there are amongst Antient and Modern Authors, concerning *the Image of God in Man*. Now since Man is composed of two parts, a Body and a Soul; there were some antient Hereticks (called therefore *αἰθερώποιοι*) who maintained that the *Image of God* was to be look'd for in his Body; and that Man as to his outward Form and Shape, and the disposition of his Members was made after the *similitude* of his Maker. And yet, as absurd an Opinion as this at the first sight seems to be, ~~yet~~ there have been some, (who desire to be thought the most refined Wits of the Age) who agree thus far with them; that they will needs have not only Angels,

gels, but even God himself to be Embodied, tho' in a more thin and fluid substance than other Material Beings are; and then the natural consequence of these Mens Opinion will be, that the *Image of God in Man* is chiefly visible and apparent in his outward Members and Frame. There are others who being sensible of those absurdities which would follow from hence, have taken so far the right path, as to place this *Image of God* in the Soul of Man. But then they are divided in their Opinions; for whilst some place it in the superior Faculties of the Soul with St. *Austin* and *Projper* amongst the Antients, and Dr. *Lightfoot* amongst the Moderns; there are others who with St. *Basil* and St. *Ambrose*, think it consists rather in the freedom of the Will. A third sort disapprove of these Opinions,

and with *Origen* prefer the Souls Immortality. The generality of Modern Divines choose rather to place it in a Quality of the Soul, than in any of its Faculties, *viz.* in that Justice and Holiness and Uprightness in which Man was at first created. The *Socinians* differ from all these, and being backt with the Authority of *St. Chrysostom*, think that this *Image of God in Man* is to be look'd for no where else, but in that Authority, Power, and Dominion which God gave him over the Inferiour part of the Creation. These are the chief and principal of those differing Opinions concerning the *Image of God in Man*; I shall not at present stay to determine which are most in the right, for this will be more evident when I have made good what I propos'd to prove

2. That the *Image of God in Man* is

Sermon Fifth.

165

is not to be found in any particular Excellency or Perfection.

1. The *Image of God in Man* can with no shew of Reason be look'd for in his Body; for when our blessed Saviour was Incarnate, 'tis said that *he took upon him the form of a* Phil. 2. 7. *servant*, and was made like Man in all things, Sin only excepted; but thro' the whole *New Testament*, we meet with no Expression which gives us the least Intimation, that Man was created like him as to his outward Form and Shape. 'Tis true, we meet with some foot-steps of the Divinity even in the Bodies of Men, we may trace the Wisdom and Power of God in their curious Make and Frame; but these Attributes of God are also plainly visible in every part of the Creation, and wonderfully discover themselves in the contrivance of the meanest Insect; even things in-

animate set forth the Wisdom and
Psal. 19. 1. Power of their Maker ; *The Hea-*
vens declare the Glory of God, and
the Firmament sheweth his handy
Work. And as to the Excellencies
 and Perfections of our Animal be-
 ing, Brutes seem to have the ad-
 vantage over us; for there are some
 Animals which excel us, and are
 far more exquisite in all the Per-
 fections of Sense; the Eagle is shar-
 per sighted, the Dog more sagaci-
 ous in smelling, so that 'tis in vain
 to seek for this *Resemblance of God*
 in any bodily Perfection; and
 therefore the holy Scripture proves
 the Folly as well as the Impiety of
 worshipping God by any visible
 Representation; because God ne-
 ver discovered himself to Mankind
Deut. 4. 15. in any visible Form. *Take heed there-*
fore lest you corrupt your selves, and
make you a Graven Image, the simi-
litude of any Figure, the likeness of
 Male

Male or Female, the likeness of any Beast that is on the Earth, the likeness of any winged Fowl that flieth in the Air; the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the Ground, the likeness of any Fish that is in the Waters beneath the Earth; and the reason is given, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the Fire. ^{ver. 15.} And therefore St. Paul reproves the Gentiles that they changed the Glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds and four-footed Beasts, and creeping things. ^{Rom. I. 23.} 'Tis true, in the Holy Scripture God is described not only with Passions and Affections (like those we feel in our selves) but also with like Senses, and corporeal Members; but this is only in compliance with our weakness; and to convey some Truths to our Understandings,

beasts M 4 which

which otherwise would not be apprehended by the generality of Mankind. God is pleased to condescend so far as to represent those things to our Imaginations, which are too nice to be considered by a gross and vulgar Understanding; but then we have sufficient Caution to secure us from Error; because in other parts of the Holy Writ, the spirituality of Gods Nature is laid down in such express Words, demonstrated by such convincing Arguments, that we must be very sottish and stupid, if we do not assent unto it. Since therefore this *Image of God* is not to be found in the outward Form or bodily shape of Man, let us consider,

2. Whether we shall have better success in seeking for it in the Soul. And here we find that those who place it in the Soul are not agreed

agreed amongst themselves ; for some place it in a Faculty of the Soul, others in a Quality. But first, it is not probable that *Gods Image in Man* consists solely in his Reason; because then all Reasonable Beings would properly be said to be created after *Gods Image*; and the more Intelligent any Being was, the more bright and glorious this *Image of God* would appear in them; whereas we never read that Angels were created after the *Image of God*, neither are Men said to bear the *Image of Angels*, which would be much more proper and expressive, if the *Image of God* did consist in the spiritual Nature of the Soul. And therefore for the same Reason I shall reject that other Opinion, that it consists in the freedom and liberty of the Will, because the Will, in truth, doth not differ from the Understanding;

standing; for the only difference between these Faculties doth result from our different conceptions of the motions and tendencies of the Soul. We cannot comprehend an Object at the first sight, we are forced to take it in pieces, to set it in a different light, to behold first one Appearance, and then another; and hence we frame to our selves different Notions of the same thing, and fancy the different Objects of our conceptions to be distinct Beings, when in truth they are Essentially but one; for the Will is nothing else but a reasonable Appetite (*i. e.*) the motion of the Soul towards such an Object, which by a previous enquiry appears useful and profitable to it. Since therefore the Will and the Understanding differ only in the different manner of our Conceptions of the differing motions and tendencies

dencies of the Soul; it will follow, that the *Image of God in Man* is not more apparent in the Will, than in the Understanding; much less doth it consist in the Souls Immortality. For tho' it must be confessed, that Death entred into the World by Sin, and that if Man had remained Innocent, he had been Immortal; yet this immortality must be thus understood, that God by his immediate Power would have preserved him from Death, not that he would have been incapable of dying :For Man was created out of the dust of the Earth, and would naturally return to that dust from whence he was taken. Our Experience plainly proves to us, that all material Beings are subject to change; they have their Beginnings and Endings, their Rise, their Growth, and Decay; those which are most lasting
and

and durable are in a continual Flux and Motion. For had Mankind been Created in a state of Immortality, had he been designed for a continual Residence in this World; to what purpose should he eat and drink? why should he increase his kind? and fill the World with a numerous Issue, which would soon encrease to too great a Multitude to be contained in it? to what Regions should he send out his numerous Colonies? or how should this Earth have been disburthened of its supernumerary Inhabitants? Besides, 'tis plain, that whilst Man continued in a state of Innocency, even in Paradise, he might have been crushed in pieces with the fall of a Tree, or have perished by the Sword; and therefore was created in a state of Mortality, capable of having his Soul separated from his Body; from whence we may reasonably



reasonably conclude, that the *Image of God in Man* is very improperly placed in this phancy'd Immortality. But perhaps the Qualities of the Soul may plead a better Title to it. This has been indeed the Opinion of many Eminent Divines; and the *Image of God* has been thought to consist in the Rectitude of the Faculties of the Soul; that Original Purity, Justice and Holiness in which Man was created. This has a very good appearance of Reason indeed, but yet I cannot close with it, and that for these following Reasons; first, because we find the *Image of God in Man* did remain after this Original Rectitude was disorder'd, and this Holiness, Purity, and Justice, was in a great measure defac'd; for after the Fall of Man he is still call'd *Gods Image*, and the Reason why Murder should be

Gen. 9. 6.

be punished with Death, is given, because Man is the *Image of God*: and in the Epistle of St. James, Men *Jam. 3. 9.* are ~~call'd~~ call'd the *Image of God*. Secondly, because the Holy Scripture describes the Condition of Mankind before the Fall after such a manner as gives no Encouragement to this Notion; for we are told that Man was created Ignorant of many things, capable of being seduc'd and drawn into Sin; which doth not agree with that exact Rectitude and inherent holiness which some Writers so earnestly contend for. And now having considered the Opinions of those Divines, who place this *Image of God*, either in the Body or the Soul; I come to the third Rank, who think it consists in Power and Authority, and that 'tis only to be found in that Rule and Dominion which God gave him over the rest of the Creation.

And

And this Opinion receives countenance from the Words immediately going before the Text. *ver.* 26. *And God said, let us make Man in our Image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over the Cattel, and over all the Earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth.* And from the Words immediately following the Text. *ver.* 28.

And God blessed them, and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the Fish of the Sea, over the Fowls of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the Earth. And they confirm their Opinion by this Argument, that the Woman is said to be the Glory of *1 Cor. 12.* Man, as Man is the Image and Glory ^{7.} of God, because of that Subjection

jection and Obedience which is due from her to her Husband, who ought to be instead of a God to cherish and protect her. And therefore Princes and Magistrates are called Gods, because they are Gods Vicegerents, and have the Rule and Dominion over other Men committed to their Charge. But to these Arguments these following Considerations may be opposed. First, that this Dominion and Government is Consequential to Mans Creation, and therefore cannot be that *Image of God*, in which Man was created: For first Man was created in *Gods Image*, and hereby qualified to be a Ruler and Governour; and then this Sovereignty and Dominion was bestowed upon him, and this Province committed to his Charge. Secondly, If this *Image of God* consisted in Dominion, then Man must have had

had more of *Gods Image* than the Woman; but the Text places them in a plain Equality as to this matter: For first 'tis said, that *God created Man in his own Image* (in the Word Man, including both Male and Female) and then 'tis presently added, *Male and Female created he them.* Thirdly, if the Image of God did consist in Dominion, then the greatest and most powerful Princes would most resemble God, and the most cruel and succesful *Nimrod* would be most like the Almighty; but we ought to consider, that Power without Goodness is so far from being an Attribute of God, that 'tis the Description of the Devil; for there is Rule and Government even amongst the Apostate Spirits; but we might as soon expect to find Light in the midst of Darkness, as *Gods Image* in those Infernal Regions.

gions. And now having examined (with what plainness and brevity I could) the different Opinions of those Divines, who have placed this *Image of God in Man*, in any particular Perfection either of Body or Mind, or any thing consequential to them; and having endeavoured to prove that they are all deficient, and want some of those properties which compleat the Notion of *Gods Image in Man*, I proceed to shew,

3. That to form an adequate Notion of this *Image of God in Man*, we must take in all those Perfections in which Man excels Inferiour Beings, and bears any Resemblance to his Maker. For the *πρωτον λεγμενον*, the first and most general Mistake concerning *Gods Image in Man* lies here; That Men frame too narrow a Notion of it; and confine their Ideas of it, to
one

one particular Endowment, which ought to be equally extended to every one of the Perfections of their Being. For tho' some Texts of Scripture bear a more particular Regard to some one of these Perfections, yet never exclusive of the rest; and, as in other parts of the *Holy Writ*, Heaven and Eternal Happiness are promised sometimes to Faith, sometimes to Obedience, and in other places to Repentance, Charity, and Alms-deeds; in every one of these peculiar Virtues including all the rest: So, when the *Image of God in Man* seems to be placed in any particular Perfection, by any Text of the *Holy Writ*; that Text must be so explained, as to include all the whole chain of them. Thus 'tis true that the *Image of God* doth consist in the Reasonable Soul; but then 'tis as plainly seen in Moral

Vertues, in the Liberty of Mans Will; neither ought we to exclude his Dominion over Inferiour Creatures. To frame then a Just and adequate Notion of this *Image of God in Man*, let us distinctly consider what all those Perfections were which God bestowed upon him at the first. That he made his Body in a curious Mould, erect in its Stature, looking up to that Heaven for which it was designed; that he inform'd this Body with a Spiritual and Immortal Soul, capable of making a right Judgment of all those Notices presented to it by the Senses, and of conforming its Will to whatsoever appeared best and most fitting to be done; and that from the Rectitude of these Faculties, if duly taken care of and governed by the Rules of right Reason, there would naturally

rally flow a conformity of Mind to the Will of God, and holiness and purity of Life and Conversation. And thus having raised Mankind above the rest of the Creation in Dignity and Excellency of Being; he gave him Dominion over Inferiour Creatures, and furnished him with all the Ingredients of a comfortable and happy Life here, as an earnest of of Everlasting Bliss and Happiness in the World to come. This is the best Notion I can frame of that *Image of God*, in which Mankind was Originally created, of which there remains a plain Tract, and many Foot-steps may still be discerned. For tho' it must be confessed, that 'twas much defaced by the Sin of our first Parents, yet Mankind is not so wholly degenerated from his Original Excellency, as to be transformed into an *abso-*

lute Beast or Devil. There are yet left some Seeds of Grace in our Souls, which if cultivated and improved; the *Image of God* will be daily renewed in us; we shall increase in Vertue, and grow more and more like God, in conformity to whom, not only the Perfection of our Nature, but our Happiness also doth consist. And thus having endeavoured to settle the Notion of *Gods Image in Man*, I shall conclude with some few Inferences from what has been said.

1. From what has been already said, we may infer, how unreasonable a thing tis for a Man to frame any *Image or Representation* of God. For since the *Image of God* consists in such things as are invisible, and cannot be represented to any Sense; 'tis therefore impossible to make any likeness of him. 'Tis more possible of the two to comprehend him

him in our Minds, than to represent him to our Sense; and therefore if our capacious Souls cannot grasp his Nature, much less can our weak Senses frame his *Image*, *he dwells in Light inaccessible*; and as 'tis impossible for the Eye of Man to see him, so 'tis as impossible for the Art of Man to frame any likeness of him. Can we draw the Figure of our own Souls, or express that part of us wherein we most resemble God? can we describe this in any bodily Figure, or divide it into parts? and if not, how can we imagine that we should be able to delineate the Original Copy, from whence the first draught was taken? for no corporal thing can represent a spiritual substance, there is no proportion between them, we may as well think to include the description of a Circle in the definition of a

strait Line, as to express any likeness of God by a visible Representation. And therefore when God had declared the Dignity of his Nature and the Excellency of his Works in a Stately and Majestick Eloquence, he demands of them, to whom they would liken him, or what likeness they would compare unto him? where they could find any thing which would be a lively *Image* and resemblance of his infinite Excellencies and Perfections? So that those Men who think to make any Resemblance of God with the touch of a Pencil, or to frame any *Image* of him in Wood or Stone; have lost all true Notion of his Being, and are equally stupid with the Statue which they make. And if so, then

2. How careful ought we to be that we frame due Notions of God
in

in our Minds ? for since every Imagination of him, is an *Image of God* painted in our Fancies, therefore we ought not to frame such Imaginations of him as are disagreeable to his glorious Essence, or so much as to fancy him in any bodily Shape, or any visible Being. For since God is a Being who comprehends all possible Perfection, and the *Image of God in Man* is only a transcript of his communicable Attributes and Perfections ; therefore we ought to be careful that we exclude all Imperfection from the Notion of a God, and that we do not think him such an one, or rather worse than our selves; or attribute to God such Qualities as would be unbecoming of a good and vertuous Man. Let us not therefore entertain such a thought, as that an Omniscient and Just Being will wink at our Sins,
or

or suffer us to go on in our Iniquities without Punishment : Or that an infinitely merciful God will expect more from us, than we are able to perform ; or create the generality of Mankind on purpose to make them miserable ; or that an infinitely pure and holy Being, can behold Sin so as to approve of it ; for since these Notions are disagreeable to the sentiments of every Just, and Good and Merciful Man ; they must needs be infinitely more opposite to the Nature of God, whose Goodness, and Justice and Mercy infinitely transcend those faint Representations and Images of it, which are derived down to his Creatures.

3. If *God made Man in his own Image*, then how careful ought we to be that we do not deface this *Image of God*, by any wilful and presumptuous Sin. For every Sin
that

that we commit is no less a Crime than High Treason against the great Creator and Governour of the World; 'tis a violation of his *Image*, a defacing of that Impress and Character which he has imprinted on our Souls; and an Indignity offered to the Picture or Statue of a Prince, has always been esteemed an affront done to the Person of the Prince himself.

4. If we are the *Image of God*, then let us live up to the Dignity of our Nature, and that Rank and Order of Beings which we hold in the World. If we are Creatures endowed with Spiritual and Immortal Souls, capable of Eternal Bliss, or Eternal Misery, let us live like Men that do not take up with our portion in this World, but *look to be cloathed upon by that* 2 Cor. 5. 2. *house which is above*: 'Tis a sign of a base and degenerate Mind to
live

live upon Husks here, when we have so good Provision made for us in our Fathers House. Let *us therefore arise and go to our Father*, let us fix our Minds on those Heavenly Joys which are at Gods right Hand, those Pleasures which alone are commensurate to our Immortal Part, to a Spiritual Being, and are the only Object worthy of our Souls. Let us therefore shew our selves to be Men (*i. e.*) Beings endowed with a reasonable Principle; who know wherein their true Happiness doth consist, and how to pursue after it; let us exercise that Dominion we enjoy, first over our selves, and let us maintain our Authority over those brutish and savage Passions which rage in our Breasts, as well as over the unreasonable Herd. For 'tis the greatest shame and reproach imaginable to a reasonable Creature, to be a slave
to

to his Lusts, and to be led captive by his unruly appetites and desires; for a Man to give himself up to furious Passions and brutish Affections; this is to degrade himself, to debase his Nature, to imitate the vilest and meanest sort of Animals, the Swine and the Goat; nay to lay himself much below them, and to make himself much more vile than the Beasts that perish: For these Brutes act conformably to their Nature, they are driven on by the irresistible impulse of Instinct placed in them by God, and necessarily pursue those Objects which are grateful and agreeable to them: But Man must take pains to be a Brute, he must unlearn and deface the Principles of Nature and Religion, and act quite contrary to the Admonitions of Conscience, and the Dictates of his Reason; he must

must put out that *Candle of the Lord* which shines within him, and wilfully shut his Eyes, and resolve to be vile and miserable.

Lastly, If we were created after the *Image of God*, then the Perfection of our Nature consists in our likeness to God. For as by Vice we debase our Souls, and lay our selves level with the brutish Herd : So by Vertue and Religion, we render our Natures more Noble, and more like God, in which our Perfection and Happiness doth consist. The more holy and devout, the more just and merciful we are, the more we partake of those Divine Attributes, which are the Glory and Perfection of a Reasonable Being. And therefore our great business in this World ought to be, to Imitate our Heavenly Father, to be conversant in Works of Justice and
Mercy,

Mercy, to visit the Sick, to relieve the Needy, to vindicate the Cause of the oppressed, to succour the Widdow and the Fatherless in their Affliction, and to lay our selves out, and all our Interests to do as much good as we can; and hereby to become as it were a God to our poor Brother: Considering that the more good we do, the more we resemble God, and the more like we are to him, the nearer we approach to Perfection in this World, and the more capable we shall be of Glory hereafter. Let us consider, that in this World we are placed in a middle Condition, between Brutes and Angels; by our Souls we partake of the Spiritual Nature, by our Bodies of the Sensual; and 'tis left to our choice, in which Rank we will place our selves. If we pursue the dictates of our Reason, if we conform

form our Wills to the Divine Will, if we keep our sensual Appetites within their due bounds, and make it our business to cultivate our Spiritual part : Then God will bestow more Grace upon us, he will prosper our endeavours, and crown them with success ; and when this short Life is ended, will reward us with degrees of Glory proportionable to our Capacities and Attainments. But if we make it the business of our Lives, to indulge our sensual Appetites, if we place our chiefest Happiness in the good things of this World, if we give the Reins to our Lusts, and employ our time in gratifying the brutish part of us ; we can expect no other Happiness but what this World affords us ; we may perhaps enjoy some little sensual Pleasure here, and gratifie the desires of our bodily Appetites ; but our Souls
will

will certainly sink down into a state of endless Misery. And if these things are so, then what remains, but that we make it the business of our Lives to renew the *Image of God* in our Souls, to encrease in Vertue and Holiness of living, to grow in Grace every Day more and more? by which we shall not only arrive at an higher Degree of Perfection in this Life, but also purchase to our selves *a more exceeding weight of Glory*, in the World to come.

The End of the Fifth Sermon.

O

The

S E R M O N VI.

I Cor. II. 26, 27. *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lords Death till he come : wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.*

T Here are two Extreame the Professors of Christianity have been guilty of in receiving the Sacrament of the Lords

O 2

Supper,

Supper. Ignorant and Prophane Persons looking only to the outward Elements, approach the Table of the Lord with as little Reverence as they do their own, and are so far from fitting and preparing themselves for this solemn Ordinance, that they neither crave a Blessing, nor return Thanks, and hardly consider what they are about. They are drawn thither either by the Custom of the Place they live in, or to qualify themselves for some Secular Employment, or by some such other external Inducement, and look upon this Holy Mystery (which ought to be approached with Reverence and Devotion) as little more than the eating a piece of Bread, and drinking a draught of Wine; not considering, that by partaking unworthily of these outward signs and Elements, they hereby become guilty

ty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. On the other hand, the superstitious Zealot (mistaking these words of our Lord, *this is my Body*, and understanding in a literal sense, what our blessed Saviour tells us are Spirit and Life, (*i. e.*) ought to be spiritually and figuratively understood) will not trust his Senses; but believes those Elements to be the real Body and Blood of Christ, which his Senses assure him are only Bread and Wine, and is guilty of Idolatry, by falling down, Adoring, and Worshipping them. The way to avoid both these Extreams, which are equally absurd and dangerous to our eternal welfare, is to attend to the Words of the Text, which if duly understood, will set our Notions right, and furnish us with due Apprehensions of this plain and intelligible, though much mistaken

Duty. For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lords Death till he come : Wherefore whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.

In which Words we are told

1. What it is we eat and drink: 'tis Bread and Wine.

2. The Reason why we eat this Bread, and drink this Wine: 'tis to shew the Lords Death till he come.

3 The danger of eating this Bread, and drinking this Wine unworthily, and without due preparation; for those who do so are guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord.

1. What it is we eat and drink, when we partake of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. 'Tis here call'd

call'd *Bread and Wine*, and that 'tis so, will appear from Sense, Reason, and Revelation. And

1. 'Tis plain and evident from Sense. Now what can be more certain than the Testimony of our senses concerning their true and proper Objects; for if we must not believe our taste, our feeling, and our eyes; how can we be certain of any thing in the World? All Knowledge is conveyed down to us by our Senses, and if our senses may deceive us, when furnished with all those necessary Qualifications which are requisite for the performance of their Operations, there can be no such thing as Knowledge or Certainty, but Mankind must wander about in the mists of Ignorance and Error. For suppose a Man should be so perverse as to deny that there is any such thing as Motion in the

O 4 World,

World, how can we better confute him, than by moving about? for he that will not believe the testimony of his own Senses, must continue still in his Scepticism and doubtfulness, because there can be no plainer *Medium* made use of, to convince him by. Suppose a Man should deny that there is such a Book as the *Bible*, or that those Words, *this is my Body*, are in it, how can that Man be convinced, but by shewing him the *Bible*, and turning to the Chapter and Verse, and reading the words to him? But if our Senses may be so deceived, as to represent to us that for Bread, which is really the Body of Christ, why may they not represent the Words and Letters falsely to us, how do we know that we are not deceived there too? Besides, the best Evidence we have for the Truth of all the other

Netuo
enim huic
evidentiæ
contradicit
nisi quem
plus defen-
sare delect-
tat quod
sentit,
quam quod
sentien-
dum sit.
invenire,
Augustin.

other Articles of our Religion, is taken from the Senses; for how can we be assured of the Resurrection of our Saviour Christ, which is the great Fundamental Article on which all the rest are built, but by the Evidence of the Senses of those Persons who saw him after his Resurrection? How can we be assured that his Doctrine was from Heaven, but by the Miracles which he performed for the confirmation of it? And how do we know that he performed those Miracles, but by the testimony of the senses of those Men who conversed with him? and therefore when *Thomas* doubted of his Resurrection, he bid him *put his hand into the print* Luke 24. *of the Nails: and that which we* ^{38.} *have heard and seen, declare we unto you, saith St. John 1 Ep. 1. 3.*

2. That 'tis Bread and Wine which we receive, and not the real
Body

Body and Blood of Christ, will appear from Reason; and that upon these three Accounts. 1. From the Nature and End of a Miracle, 2. From the Nature of a Sacrament. 3. From the Absurdities and ill Consequences which would follow, if it were otherwise.

1. From the Nature and End of a Miracle. For a Miracle is nothing else, but a supernatural Effect, evident to Sense; so that two things are necessary to a Miracle, 1. That there be a supernatural Effect wrought, 2. That this effect be evident to Sense; for it cannot be known to be a Miracle, unless it falls under the Evidence of our Senses. Men may indeed tell us confidently that it is so, but they cannot shew us any good and convincing Reason why we should believe them; for every Miracle which is wrought, must

must be designed for some End ; and this End generally is either for our Conversion to, or Confirmation in the Faith : Now how can I be convinced of any Error, or Strengthened in the Faith by a Miracle, of the truth of which I have no certain Proof from the Testimony of Sense? for I may as well call in Question the real performance of such a Miracle, as doubt of the truth of that Proposition, for the proof of which this Miracle is pretended to be wrought, because they both depend upon the same Authority, the Confident Assertion of the Proposer.

2. If we consider the Nature of a Sacrament, it will appear that the Elements are not converted into the real Body and Blood of Christ ; for a Sacrament is a visible Sign of an invisible Grace ; now what need is there of a visible
ble

ble sign of that which is present? If the Body and Blood of Christ are present in the Sacrament, then where is the sign of it? Besides, it must be that Body which was Crucified, and that Blood which was poured out upon the Cross; because the End of celebrating this Sacrament, is the Remembrance of Christ's Death and Passion, and if so, how could our Saviour when he gave the Sacrament to his Disciples before his Passion, give them his Crucified Body?

3. Consider the Absurdities and ill Consequences which would follow, if that Body which hung upon the Cross, and that Blood which was shed, are really and properly eat and drank in the literal sense of the Words, when we receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. For what could be more barbarous than to tear and
rend

rend the Body of our Blessed Saviour, and to use it worse than the Soldiers did his Garments? What could give more offence to Heathens and Infidels, than that the most Sacred of our Religious Rites, should be Eating the Flesh, and Drinking the Blood of a Man? The *Egyptians* were the scoff and laughing-stock of the rest of the World, for worshipping the Leeks and Onions which grew in their Gardens; but certainly those Christians may be justly esteemed more brutish and stupid, who first pretend to make their God, and then fall down and adore him, and then eat him. Nay, that affirm not only that the whole Body of Christ, and the whole Mass of his Blood is in every Crumb of Bread, and in every drop of the Wine; but even the Divinity too; and that Christ himself received it when
he

he celebrated his last Supper with his Disciples; as 'tis plainly taught by the Council of Trent. These are such Monstrous Absurdities, that one would think no Reasonable Man could believe them, did not Experience convince us of the contrary: That which the Papists say for themselves is, that the *Holy Scripture* is plain and exprefs in this particular, that Christ calls it *his Body*, and says it is so; and therefore whatsoever difficulties may arise, as to the manner, yet we ought to give up our Reason to Revelation, and believe the Assertion; and this is made the reason why the Sacrament ought to be Adored with the highest, and most solemn sort of Divine Worship. But if we will but impartially consider the Words of the

Sempre la Chiesa ha creduto, che il corpo di Christo, e sotto la specie di pane, & il sangue sotto quella del vino per virtù della consecratione, maper concomitanza ogni uno sia sotto ciascuna delle parti loro, quanto sotto ambidue. Historia del Concilio Tridentino. Pag. 332. Dopo finito il Decreto furono letti gli 11. Anathematismi. 1º. Contra ehi negherà, che nell' Eucharistia si contenga vera, real e sostanzialmente il corpo, & il sangue, con l'anima, e la divinità di Christo, Pag. 333.

Holy

Holy Scripture, we shall find that these Words are not duly understood, and that they mean and design quite another thing, than what they are brought to prove. For these Words, *this is my Body*, import only thus much; this signifies my Body, or this represents my Body to you, as will appear by considering the like Expressions in the *Holy Scripture*; as when our Saviour says, *He is the Door and the true Vine*, and likewise where the Church is said to be *Christ's Body*, and *the Rock which followed the Israelites, to be Christ*. All ^{1 Cor. 10.} which Expressions in Scripture, are ^{4.} to be understood in a figurative, and metaphorical Sense; and import that *Christ* is like to a Vine, or a Rock; and as the Head is to the Body, so *Christ* is to his Church, in governing and directing of it. Thus the Bread in the Sacrament

is

is said to be *Christ's Body* (*i. e.*) It represents to us his crucified Body ; that by the breaking of this Bread, and pouring out of this Wine, we may be put in mind of what he did and suffered for us; and by believing in him, and exerting our Faith, Repentance, and Charity, receive the Benefits of his Death and Passion. For were it possible for us to eat the real Body of *Christ*, and to drink his Blood; had the Jews done it when he was alive, or the Soldiers when he hung upon the Cross, yet this had been of no use to them, or any ways conduc'd to their Salvation. For 'tis not the Body or Blood of *Christ*, properly speaking, by which we are saved; for these would have done us no good, unless he had Died for us; and therefore the plain truth is this, that we are saved by the benefits which he purchased

chased for us, and the merits of
 his Death and Passion. *Christ* dy-
 ing upon the Cross, made an At-
 tonement for our Sins, he appeas'd
 the Wrath of our angry Judge,
 and he has hereby obtained of his
 Father this gracious Concession;
 That if we perform those Condi-
 tions which he requires of us, *viz.*
 Faith, Repentance, and Obedience,
 then our Sins shall be blotted out,
 and pardoned, and God will look
 upon us with as favourable an Eye
 as if we had never offended him.
 And therefore I have often won-
 dered what some *Protestant Writers*
 mean, who stiffly maintain, that
 by *Christs* being really present in
 the Sacrament, the Church of Eng-
 land ^{holds somewhat} more than a Spiritual Presence
 (*i. e.*) more than a Figurative and
 Metaphorical one, and fancy some
 great Mystery couch'd in those
 Words of *Christs* being Really pre-
 sent

τὸ πρὸς τὸ
 μὴ τὸ αἰ-
 σῶν, τὴν κν-
 εακὴν με-
 λαβεῖν
 ἀφ' ὁρασίας.
 Clemens.
 Rom.

sent in the Sacrament; where
there is no more meant by them than
this; that he who fits and prepares
himself for the worthy receiving
of the Elements of Bread and
Wine, shall really and truly partake
and enjoy the benefit of that
Pardon, which God has promised
to the World; and *Christ* has pur-
chased by Dying for us, and has
seal'd to us by his precious Blood
and that hereby God will con-
vey down to him his Grace, to
lay hold on this gracious Promise
and to perform the Conditions re-
quired of him. This is all that can be
meant by them, if we attend to our
own Notions, and the Reason of the
thing: For as by the delivery of
a Deed, a *real* Estate is convey'd
over from one Man to another, so
by performing this Sacred Rite
we obtain the real benefits of his
Death and Passion. 'Tis true, our
fir

Sermon Sixth.

211

first Reformers, in the beginning of the Reformation, having no other Dissenters to deal with but those of the *Romish* persuasion; and they also joining in our Worship, and continuing in Communion with us, till the *Popes* Bull, Excommunicating *Queen Elizabeth*, forbid them so to do: Our *first Reformers*, I say, were very tender of using any Expressions which might fright them out of the Church, and therefore still retained the old way of speaking, made use of by the *Antient Fathers*, and by the Holy Scriptures themselves; but yet reduc'd them back to their Primitive meaning and sound Sense; and generally explained them after such a manner, as to make it appear to every one that the Words

If by virtue of these Words, Really, Substantially, Corporally, Verily and Indeed, and Christ's Body and Blood, the Fathers

shall be supposed to speak for Transubstantiation, they may as well suppose it to be our Doctrine too, for we use the same Words; and therefore those Authorities signify nothing against us, unless those Words can be proved in them to signify more than our Sense of them doth Import. *Ep. Taylor of the Real Presence, Page 185.*

P 2

were

Pero' esser
d' auverti-
re, di non
metter dif-
ficoltà in
cose chia-
re per
qualche di-
versità di
parole.
P. 233.

were us'd in a foreign a-
tive Sense; and therefore
well observed by the
the History of the Council
That we ought to take
we make plain things di-
framing different Notions
because some diversity
is made use of in the
of them. To make this
if possible by several
the Church of England
calls the Bread and
Body and Blood of Ch-
says, they are verily a-
taken and received in
Supper; but by whom
taken? 'tis only by the
and how are they recei-
by Faith. Now what
there be made of rece-
dy by Faith? How ca-
and drink by Faith, but
rative Sense? And wha-

gn and figura-
 therefore, as 'tis
 the Author of
Council of Trent,
 take care how
 gs difficult, by
 tions of things,
 ersity of Words
 the Explaining
 e this more plain
 eral Instances,
 and 'tis true,
 nd Wine, the
 f *Christ*; and
 ily and indeed
 d in the Lords
 whom are they
 oy the faithful;
 received? only
 what Sense can
 receiving a Bo-
 ow can we eat
 , but in a figu-
 d what can be
 meant

meant and understood hereby, but
 this plain Proposition, That by
 believing the Death and Suffer-
 ings of our blessed Saviour, and
 living up to the End of them, we
 partake of the benefits of his Death
 and Passion. And thus, in that
 Answer of our *Church Catechism*,
 when the Question is put, what
 are the benefits we are made par-
 takers of, by the receiving the Sa-
 crament of the Lords Supper? The
 Answer is, the strengthening and
 refreshing our Souls, by the Body
 and Blood of Christ, as our Bo-
 dies are by the Bread and Wine.
 Here is a plain difference made be-
 tween the Food of our Body, and
 the Food of our Soul, and they
 are to be taken in a different Sence:
 The Food of our Body is to be
 taken in a plain literal Sense, and
 is that Bread and Wine which is
 taken in at our Mouths, and affords

Sermon Sixth.

nourishment to our Bodies ; the Food of our Souls is a figurative Expression, and denotes that spiritual Refreshment which our Souls receive, by the due receiving of this Sacrament, (*i. e.*) the comfortable hopes of the Pardon of our Sins, and the favour of God, on the account of the Death and Merits of our Blessed Saviour. By all which it plainly appears, that there is no difference made, or change wrought in the Elements of Bread and Wine, by the Consecration of them, only they are dedicated to a Holy use, *viz.* to put us in Mind of what our Saviour Christ did, and suffered on our behalf, what benefits we are Entitled to thereby, and made the Instruments to convey Gods Grace into our Souls ; Bread and Wine they were before Consecration, and Bread and

~~conveys~~
wine

Wine they remain afterwards; but If by the performance of these Rites, our Faith is strengthened, our Hope confirmed, our Obedience rendered more exact and conformable to his Laws; we then become partakers of his Death and Passion, and receive the Benefits which he has purchased for us; which is the plain meaning of that figurative and much mistaken Expression, *of eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ*. And thus we find it explained in other places of the Holy Scripture. St. Paul speaking of this Sacrament, says, *The Cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the* ^{I Cor. 10.} *Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?* And the Apostle to make it more plain, in the Text, calls the Elements after Consecration, Bread, and the Cup;

and to put all out of question, our Saviour himself explains these Words to his Disciples. For when John 6. 63. he had told them, *v. 53. Except ye Eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and Drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you;* and the *Jews* look'd upon it as an absurd saying, and even his Disciples were startled at it, he explains his figurative way of Expressing himself, *v. 63. The Words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life :* As if he should have said, I speak to the *Jews* in Parables, and teach them after the way of their *Rabbies*, by Apologues and figurative Expressions; but to you my Disciples, it is given and granted, as an especial Priviledge, to know the plain meaning of them; the Words which I speak unto you, are to be taken Spiritually, and not in a Literal Sense. And that
the

the Disciples thus understood our Saviour, is plain by their answer, v. 68, 69. *Thou hast the Words of Eternal Life : We believe, and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* I shall only add one Observation, which alone might put an End to this Controversie; that these Words, *this is my Body*, are an *Hebraism*; and in the Hebrew Language things are commonly said to be that which they Represent. Thus Joseph expounding *Pharaoh's Dream*, says, *the seven good Kine, are seven years*, (i. e.) signify seven years; for had our Saviour Christ meant to turn the Bread into his real Body, he would not have said, *this is my Body*; but let this Bread be my Body, or this Bread shall be my Body; for in propriety of Speech, 'tis never said in any Language, *this is such a thing*, unless it were really that very thing before

Gen. 41.
26.

before the Words were spoken. The use of all that I have said, in short is this, that we may be from hence enabled to frame right Notions of this Holy Ordinance, that so we may not be carried away with every *Wind of Doctrine*, and seduc'd by those who lie in wait to deceive; but receiving this Sacrament with a settled Mind, and quiet Conscience, we may obtain the benefit of it, to our Souls health. And so I proceed.

2. To shew the Reason why we Eat this Bread, and Drink this Wine. 'Tis to shew the Lords Death till he come.

Now to shew forth the Lords Death is

1. To Commemorate the Sufferings of our Lord and Saviour.
2. To declare to the World our Gratitude and Thankfulness, for the benefits which we receive by them.

them. But because this is the proper Subject of a Passion Sermon, I shall wave the prosecution of these Heads at present ; and come to the last General included in the Words of the Text.

3. To shew the danger of *Eating this Bread, and Drinking this Wine unworthily*; such as do so, are guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ.

In order to explain this to you, I shall enquire

1. What is meant by *Eating and Drinking unworthily*.

2. What it is to be *guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ*.

1. What is meant by *Eating and Drinking unworthily*. 

Such is the frailty of our Natures, that even in our best and most Religious Performances, there is much Sin and Imperfection ; and in this Sense, there is no Man who
is

is worthy to receive this Holy Sacrament, that is, duly fitted and qualified for the receiving of it ; but yet there is no Man, but may so fit and qualifie himself for it, if he sincerely and heartily endeavours it, that he may receive Benefit thereby. To the exact and punctual performance of any other Duty of Religion, there is required a better disposition of Mind than we can possibly bring our selves unto ; we are not worthy to appear before God in Prayer, to take his Holy Name into our Mouths, or to Praise and Magnifie him with our unhallowed Lips, and yet since God has commanded us to frequent those Ordinances of our Religion, and to bear a part in them, 'tis our indispensable Duty so to do ; and we may be said to perform them worthily, when we are furnished with such suitable Dispositions and Quali-

Qualifications, as God has promised to accept of, though not perfectly such as he requires of us : A Man who is thus Qualified, is certainly a worthy Receiver of the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*. But it will be a more difficult matter to determine, what Persons those are who receive this Sacrament unworthily, for this depends upon a farther Consideration, which is, what Preparation is absolutely necessary for every one who intends to receive the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*. And that I may give a satisfactory Answer to this Question, I shall consider,

1. What Precepts are laid down in the Holy Scripture concerning this matter.

2. What was the Practice of Christians in the first and purest Ages of the Church.

1. What Precepts are laid down in

in the Holy Scripture. Now we are commanded, first, to examine our selves whether we Repent us truly of our former Sins, in the *ver.* immediately following the Text. *Let a Man examine himself, and so let him Eat of that Bread, &c.* For the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper* being a Confirmation and Ratification of that Vow which we made in our Baptism; even common Sense would dictate to us, that a thorough Examination of our Ways is requisite to bring us to the Knowledge of our Offences, and we must first know wherein we have Offended, before we can beg Gods Pardon, and renew our Vows.

Secondly, this self Examination must produce a sincere and hearty Repentance for our former Sins; evidenc'd by a real Sorrow for having offended God, a Conviction in our Minds, of the pernicious Nature

Nature of Sin, and a well grounded Resolution to leave and forsake every evil Way, and to give up our selves intirely to the Service of God, and to promote his Honour and Glory in the World. Thirdly, We ought to have a lively Faith in Gods Mercy through Christ, because 'tis by Faith alone that we obtain forgiveness of our Sins; and *there is no other Name given unto Men whereby we can be* ^{Acts 4. 12.} *saved:* And therefore for the Strengthening and Confirming of this Faith, we ought frequently to call to mind the Death and Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour; especially at this time, to fix them on our Memories, and to have our Hearts and Affections raised and transported with them. And lastly, because forgiveness of our Offences, and Trespases against God, is promised us on this Condition,

that

that we forgive those who have injured and offended us their trespasses; and because this is a Feast and Banquet of Love, therefore we must be in perfect Love and Charity with all Men, remembering that command of the Apostle,

Eph. 5. 2. *That we walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an Offering and Sacrifice to God; and that God will have Mercy rather than Sacrifice; for*

Mat. 9. 13. *if we bring our Gift to the Altar, and remember that our Brother hath ought against us (i. e.) that any Man hath any Just cause of complaint against us, or that we have injur'd any Man, let us leave our Gift at the Altar, and be reconciled to our Brother, (i. e.) we must make reparation, and satisfaction to those*

Mat. 5. 23. 24.

whom we have wronged & injured; whether it be in Body, Goods, or Reputation; and as far as it lies
in

in our power, undoing the Injury, and testifying to the World our hearty and sincere wish and desire, that it had never been done; if we have been guilty of Injustice, Extortion, or over-reaching our Neighbour, & satisfaction cannot be made to the Person wronged, or his Relations (and such Cases there may fall out) then we ought to make the Poor their Proxy, and not retain one Mite of those ill gotten Goods, which will render our Sacrifice an unacceptable Offering in the sight of God. This ought to be the scope of our Preparation for the *Lords Supper*, recommended to us by the Church, and confirmed by the unquestionable Authority of the Holy Writ.

Let us 2^{dly}, consider what has been the Practice of Christians in the first and purest Ages of the Church; and if we search into the

Q

Records

Records and Monuments of those times we shall find, That the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper* was a part of their daily Service ; and therefore with great probability 'tis thought, That that Petition in the *Lords Prayer*, *Give us this day our daily bread*, doth relate to this Sacrament ; they lived in daily expectation of Sealing with their Blood, the Truth of that Religion which they professed, and receiving the *Crown of Martyrdom*, and therefore by a daily receiving the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, did encourage and strengthen themselves to undergo the Fiery Tryal. When by degrees the heat of Persecution did abate, the Zeal of the Professors of Christianity began to languish and decay ; Ease and Prosperity diverted their Minds from the Duties of Religion ; and the Exercises of Devotion, to
the

the pursuit after Sensual and Worldly Enjoyments; and then to receive this Sacrament every *Lords-Day* was thought sufficient; at length, as True and Vital Religion degenerated into Pomp and Shew, and instead of real and substantial Piety, an intollerable number of burthensome and insignificant Ceremonies were introduced into the Church; and Men placed the hopes of their Salvation rather in Orthodoxy of Faith, and a punctual Compliance with the External of Religion, than in sincere Probity and Goodness; the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper* began to be neglected, and became more so every day, by reason of some pernicious Doctrines which were introduced into the Church: For when some Texts in the *Holy Scripture* began to be Interpreted and understood, in too strict and

severe a Sense; Men were frightened from this gracious and comfortable Ordinance, and thought it much better to forbear it, than to incur the danger of receiving it unworthily. For when they were taught by those rigid and over-hard Task-masters, that no Man could come to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, who had not undergone an exact and punctual Preparation, under the Penalty of Eternal Damnation; and that this Preparation did consist in a long Course of Devotion, or at least in such a frame of Spirit and temper of Mind, as few Men find in themselves; Men began to withdraw themselves from the Table of the Lord, and out of a slavish and superstitious Fear, of receiving the Sacrament unworthily, and without due Preparation, ran into the contrary Extream, and fell into a

steve

Pro-

Prophane and Scandalous neglect of this Holy Ordinance. When the meaning of these Words, *he that Eateth and Drinketh unworthily, Eateth and Drinketh Damnation to himself*, and as it is in the Text, *is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*; was thought to be, that the Sin of unworthy receiving of this Sacrament was so great, as not to admit of Pardon and Forgiveness, and even to exceed that of the *Jews*, in Crucifying the Lord of Life; there were very few Persons, and those generally the most conceited and unfit, who durst venture to receive this Holy Sacrament; and then it was thought sufficient once or twice a year, or once in a Mans life to Celebrate the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. How much these Men are mistaken, I shall have occasion hereafter to make appear,

Q 3

At

Sermon Sixth.

At present I shall pursue the Thread of my Discourse, and from what has been said, consider what Preparation is absolutely necessary for every one who intends to receive the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*: And this I shall perform in these following Propositions.

1. That there is a Preparation requisite to the due performance of other Duties of Religion, as well as to the Receiving of the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*.

2. That this being the most Solemn Duty of the Christian Religion, requires the most serious Preparation for it.

3. That every Mans Obligation to prepare himself is different, according to the different Circumstances of his Condition.

4. That 'tis then only that Men receive the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper* unworthily, when they are
not

not disposed to answer the Ends of its Holy Institution.

I. That there is a Preparation requisite for the due performance of the other Duties of the Christian Religion, as well as the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*. We ought to compose our selves to a serious and devout frame of Spirit, when we offer up our Prayers and Praises unto God in Private, much more when we attend upon God in Publick, and join with others in the Offices of Religion. *Keep thy foot when thou entrest into the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of fools,* was the Advice of the Wisest of Men; which has been already treated of in a particular Discourse; and I the rather chuse to inculcate it again, because there are so many who omit the receiving the *Sacrament*

Ecccl. 5. 1.

*See Vol. 1.
pag. 156.*

of the Lords Supper, on this sole pretence; because they say they are not fit for it, they are not duly prepared; and yet these very Men, boldly and presumptuously venture on the performance of all the other Duties of Religion, without any Preparation at all; whereas some Preparation is as necessary to the due hearing and reading the Word of God, and offering up the Sacrifice of Prayers and Thanksgivings, as to the receiving the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*. For if we approach unto Gods Courts with hearts filled with Worldly thoughts, or reeking with Lust, Envy, or Revenge, God will abhor our Offerings, and our Prayers will be turned into Sin. If we do not hear his Word with a sincere purpose to be bettered by it, and to direct and reform our Lives and Conversations

versations thereby, God will turn a deaf Ear to our Requests ; for why should we expect that God should give us those things which we our selves do not desire, and seek after? *If I regard Iniquity* Ps. 66. 18.

in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer. But tho' there is some Preparation necessary towards the due performance of all the Duties of Religion, yet 'tis to be consider'd

2. That this Sacrament being the most solemn Duty of the Christian Religion, doth require the most solemn Preparation for it. For since this Sacrament may be considered under the Notion of a Covenant, for thereby we renew the Covenant made with God in our Baptism; or of a Sacrifice, because hereby we do not only partake of the Sacrifice of Christs Death upon the Cross, but we also offer up the Sacrifice of our Praise and

Thankf-

Thanksgiving unto God, we Dedicate our Selves, our Bodies and Souls to his Service; and lastly, under the Notion of a Feast, for hereby we partake of the Table of the Lord, and receive the Gifts and Graces of his Holy Spirit; therefore from the Consideration of these many excellent Ends, for the Attainment of which this Holy Ordinance was Instituted, we may learn how great care we ought to take, and how great diligence we ought to use in the Celebrating of it. For if the Husbandman chearfully undergoes the pains and labour of Tilling a fruitful Land, and grateful Soil, because he expects the reward of his Labour in a plentiful Crop; how much more careful ought we to be to prepare our Hearts for this Holy Ordinance, when there are so many excellent Priviledges to be obtained

tained by a worthy partaking of it? And how justly blameable shall we be, if through our own sloth and laziness, we deprive our selves of those excellent Advantages, which otherwise we might enjoy? and yet

3. Our Obligation to prepare our selves is different, according to the different Circumstances we are in. It is not always necessary that we should in a set and solemn manner prepare our selves: If we are at any time called upon to receive the Sacrament with a Friend, or some sudden Emergency falls out, or we are incumbred with any unavoidable business, or indispensibly obliged to employ our time in providing a sustenance for our selves and Families; God will accept of an habitual and less solemn Preparation; and it will be sufficient, that the general Course
of

of our Lives be directed to live Righteously, Soberly and Godly, and that we are guilty of no wilful and presumptuous Sin, which remains unrepented of, and that we address our selves to God with as much Zeal, Fervency and Devotion, as the Exigency of the time will give us leave. In such Cases as these God will accept of the Will for the Deed, and will proportion our Rewards to the Sincerity and good Intention of our Hearts. It remains therefore

4. That 'tis then only that we receive the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper* unworthily, when we are not disposed to answer the Ends of its Holy Institution. Now the chief Ends why this Sacrament was instituted were, that being put in mind hereby of the bitter Death and Passion of our Blessed Saviour, the Miracles of his Love,
and

and the wonderful Benefits which he purchased for us, we might be prevailed on to Repent of our Sins, and to persevere in a Sober, Righteous, and Godly Life. From whence it is evident, that *we eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily*, when we allow our selves in any known Sin, when at the same time that we partake of the Table of the Lord, we also partake of the Table of Devils, (i. e.)^{21.}

1 Cor. 10.

we make a Covenant with God to forsake our Sins, and yet resolve still to go on in them, and to indulge our selves in the Omission of our known Duty, or in any wicked Course of living. And from hence it will be easie to give an answer to the

2. Quer. What is meant by being guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ? *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the*

the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. And as it follows in the 29th ver. of this Chapter, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lords Body. In the first of these Expressions, there is laid before our Eyes the heinousness of the Offence, and in the latter, the Punishment is denounc'd against such an one, who eats and drinks unworthily (i. e.) with a hardened and impenitent Heart, and a Resolution to go on still in his Sins. He is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord; he has no just Notion of, nor true Value for the Death and Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour; but by repeating those sins which were the occasions of his Sufferings, as far as in him lies, he Crucifies his Saviour afresh, and puts him to an open shame; and such a Man shall certainly receive Con-

Heb. 6. 6.

Condemnation in the some temporal Punishment the Word which Damnation, must 'tis presently added this cause many are amongst you, and the Passage relates to that befell the Corinthians Judgment for their of this Holy Ordinance out a sincere and (rance) he shall certainly eternal Damnation in come; and therefore horred, ver. 32. to that we be not Judge which is as much as have not been so careful to have been in Re- ly Sacrament, let selves, and Repent Offence, and then our the Penalties der

3113

in this World (*i.e.*)
 Punishment, (for so
 which is Translated
 soft signifie, because
 added, *ver. 30.* For
 y are weak and sickly
 and many sleep; which
 to that Sicknes which
in *the* *World*, as a Just
 their prophanation
 ordinance) and (with
 and hearty Repen-
 certainly incur E-
 ion in the World to
 therefore we are ex-
 to Judge our selves,
 Judged of the Lord,
 such as to say, if we
 so careful as we ought
 in Receiving this Ho-
 let us Judge our
 pent of this heinous
 then we shall not in-
 es denounced against
 obsti-

obstinate & impenitent Offenders.

From what has been said, we may learn these following Lessons.

I. That we cannot Justifie our selves upon any pretence whatsoever in the disuse of this holy Institution. For there can be no Reason for living in the open and scandalous neglect of it, but a Resolution to continue in our Sins, and to persevere in our disobedience against the Laws of God; and if this is our Resolution, to what purpose do we make profession of Christianity? Why do we take the Name and Badge of Christians? why do we not renounce our Baptism, and turn *Turks* and *Infidels*? But if we do resolve to Repent of our past Sins, and to lead better lives for the time to come; let us omit no opportunity of approaching to the Table of the Lord, and tho' we are not so well Prepared as we desire,

desire, and ought to be, tho' our Minds are not in so holy and devout a frame; yet if *we hunger and thirst after Righteousness*, if Mat. 5. 6. we heartily and sincerely desire, and endeavour to be better, we shall receive Spiritual strength, and by the Grace and Assistance of Gods Holy Spirit, we shall *draw the Water of Life out of these Wells of Salvation*. Isa. 12. 1.

2. That as far as in us lies, we ought to fit and dispose our selves to receive Benefit by this Holy Ordinance: For since 'tis absolutely necessary, that we should at some set Times take a review of our Lives, and Judge and Condemn our selves for our frequent Miscarriages in the performance of our Duty, there can be no time more proper, than before the Receiving the *Sacrament of the Lords Supper*; for the more sensible we

R

are

are that we have done amiss, the more probable 'tis, that we should perform those Vows we make, of living better for the future; and the more deeply we are affected with Gods Love to us, the more inclinable we shall be, to make the grateful returns of a Filial Obedience. And therefore tho' it may be lawful, and sometimes our Duty, to receive this Sacrament without a Solemn Preparation for it; yet this we shall always find true; that the better we are Prepared for it, the more Fruit and Benefit we shall receive thereby; and the more deeply we are affected with a sense of our Sins, the more humble we shall be, and the more desirous of pardon and forgiveness; and the more serious and particular we are in the consideration of our Saviours Death and Sufferings, the more irreconcilable will our hatred

tred be against those Sins, which were the occasion of Inflicting these Sufferings upon him; and the more deeply sensible of his Love and Affection towards us, and our Obligations to maintain an universal Love and Charity to all Mankind. And therefore those Persons must needs be very much to blame, who have Time and Opportunity, so much Time that it lies upon their hands, and they do not know how to spend it; and yet grudge to allot a small portion of it, to fit and prepare themselves for the receiving of this Sacrament. Their Consciences must needs accuse them for their neglect in this World, and great will their Condemnation be in the World to come, when the Lord of the Feast shall say unto them, *Verily, none of these Men shall taste* ^{Luke 14. 24.} *of my Supper.*

R 2

3. Hence

Sermon Sixth.

3. Hence we may easily discern when we receive benefit by this Holy Ordinance; and that is, when the End of it is answered: The Reformation and bettering of our Lives. When we find Gods Grace assisting us to conquer any unruly Passion, any corrupt and inordinate Affection, and to make our Wills more conformable to the Will of God; then we may be assured, that we have received benefit by this Holy Ordinance; and especially, when the receiving of it, makes us more desirous to receive it again, when we hunger and thirst after this Heavenly Food, then 'tis a good sign that 'tis turned into nourishment, and conduces to our Spiritual Strength and Refreshment.

The End of the Sixth Sermon.

S E R M O N VII.

I Cor. 15. 29. *Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead? and why stand we in Jeopardy every hour?*

I Shall not engage in those many intricate Disputes, which have been raised concerning the intent and meaning of these Words amongst Divines, but rather close with the Explication of a Learned Author, who observes

Dr. Edwards Enquiries, &c.

R 3

that

that the Words in the Original, which are here Translated *for the dead*, bear the same import, and ought to have been rendered, *because of the Dead*, or *for the sake of the Dead*, or *by reason of the Dead*, and then the meaning of the Words will be; If there be no *Resurrection* of the Dead, to what purpose are so many converted to the Christian Faith, and Entred into the Church by Baptism, by beholding the pious Lives, and couragious Deaths of such as suffer for the Testimony of the Faith, and the keeping of a good Conscience? How comes the Blood of the Martyrs to become the Seed of the Church? and that the Christian Religion flourishes, the more 'tis Persecuted and Depressed? This Explication is easie and natural, and agreeable to the Coherence of the Words with the former

mer part of the Chapter. Which
 I find thus Paraphrased. “ You
 “ see O *Corinthians*, that the Suf-
 “ ferings which the Christians un-
 “ dergo, are so far from discour-
 “ raging others from turning *Chri-*
 “ *stians*, that vast numbers of Un-
 “ believers are animated thereby
 “ to own the *Christian* Profession,
 “ and to Live and Die in the ac-
 “ knowledgment of it. See what
 “ Power and Efficacy the Example
 “ of those Saints hath, and how
 “ it works on the Hearts of the
 “ most resolved, and makes them
 “ presently renounce and forsake
 “ their evil ways. Now tell me
 “ O ye Men of *Corinth*, you espe-
 “ cially, that Question the Arti-
 “ cle of the *Resurrection*, is it no-
 “ thing that so many every day
 “ voluntarily admit themselves
 “ into the Church by Baptism,
 “ and that upon the account of

R 4

“ the

Sermon Seventh.

“ the deceased Confessors, and
“ Martyrs, whom they behold
“ Sacrificing all that is dear to them
“ in this World, to purchase the
“ Glories of another. Why should
“ you think there is no other Life,
“ when you see Men lay down
“ their Lives for their Religion,
“ and others presently taking up
“ that Religion, for which they
“ lost their Lives? and for what
“ Reason do so great shoals of
“ Converts come into the Baptif-
“ mal Waters? What shall they
“ do who are thus Baptized? To
“ what End and Design do they
“ this, and continue to do so?
“ To what purpose, on what ac-
“ count is it? Ye cannot but see
“ that it is for the sake of the
“ Saints, whose Exemplary Lives
“ and Deaths they have beheld,
“ and thereby were througly con-
“ vinced of the truth of Christiani-
“ ty,

' ty, which promises a better Life
 ' after this, at the Resurrection of
 ' the Dead. To the same purpose,
 ' another *Anonymous* Author. To
 ' what end (says he) do Men tie
 ' themselves up to the strict Ob-
 ' servation of the Rules and Pre-
 ' cepts of the Christian Religion,
 ' by their Covenant in Baptism?
 ' Why do they expose themselves
 ' to the most cruel Tortures, Racks,
 ' and Death it self? If there be
 ' no Resurrection, why do they
 ' undergo those severe Duties of
 ' Mortification and Self-denial?
 ' And therefore the Apostle adds,
 ' I protest by your rejoycing which I ver. 3.
 ' have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I
 ' die daily, if after the manner of
 ' Men I have fought with Beasts at
 ' Ephesus, what advantageth it me,
 ' if the dead rise not? Let us eat
 ' and drink, for to morrow we die.
 ' But on the contrary, if there be
 ' a

' a *Resurrection*, as certainly there
 ' will be one, then we have rea-
 ' son to go on with Courage, Re-
 ' solution, and Perseverance, in
 ' the Conscientious discharge of
 ' our Duty, considering that there
 ' will remain for us glorious and
 ' excellent Rewards, which will
 ' expect us in the World to come.
 ' Wherefore my beloved Brethren,
 ' be stedfast, unmoveable, always
 ' abounding in the Work of the Lord,
 ' for as much as ye know that your
 ' labour is not in vain in the Lord.

ver. 58.

This being the plain meaning of
 the Words, I shall the rather close
 with it, and endeavour to shew

1. How this Article of a *Re-
surrection* has been understood, and
the differing Opinions about it.
2. What is the true Notion of
it.
3. I shall confirm this by Scri-
pture, and Reason, and endeavour

to

to clear it from such difficulties, as render it perplex'd.

I. I shall consider, how the Doctrine of a *Resurrection* from the dead has been understood, and the differing Opinions about it. For tho' there were many among the *Vulgar Heathens*, who thought that the Soul was Mortal, and by consequence, that there was no state of Life after this was ended, yet the wiser and more rational Men amongst them, were of another Opinion; and the greatest part of the World have always held, That after the Soul is separated from the Body, it passes into some Heavenly Mansions and Abodes, where it continues in an eternal and immutable State, either of Bliss or Misery. There were indeed many, and very differing Opinions of the State of the Soul after Death, as there must needs be, where Men have

*Permanere
animos
consensu
nationum
omnium,
&c.
Cicero.*

have nothing to guide themselves by, but their own bewildred Reason, and want the Clue of Divine Revelation. 'Twas a prevailing Opinion amongst the Eastern Nations, That the Soul passed into some other Body, and so into several others successively, till at last after a long Pilgrimage, it found some place of Eternal rest and satisfaction. And therefore the *Pythagoreans* abstained from all manner of Flesh, for fear of being guilty of the Murder of their best Friends, or that they should feed on their nearest Relations: But hardly any of them did believe that the same Body would be raised from the dead, and united and joined to the Soul again; the *Atheists* have in all Ages ridiculed it, such as *Lucian* and *Julian* the Apostate; the *Philosophers* disputed against it; the *Jews* positively denied it; and

and even many of the *Christians* undermined this Article of our Faith, either by holding that the *Resurrection* was to be understood in a Spiritual, and not a literal Sense; or else was partial, of the Just only, but not of the Unjust; of the Soul, but not of the Body; of the Body, but not of the same Body. These are the differing Opinions which have most obtained concerning this Article of our Faith; which being premised, I proceed to shew

2. Which is the true Notion of the *Resurrection*, and in what Sense it ought to be understood by us. Now by the *Resurrection*, the best Authors understand the Re-union of the Soul with the Body: For Man consists of two parts, a fading and perishing Body, and an immaterial and immortal Soul; and his Life and being doth

doth consist in the Vital Union of both these ; for whilst the Soul remains united to the Body, the Man is said to live, or to exist , and when these two are separated one from the other, then he may as properly be said to die or perish ; tho' neither of these parts of which he is composed and made up, do either lose their being, or decay ; for the Body only *returns to that dust from whence it was taken*, and the Soul unto that God *who first Created it*. Now when God shall be pleased, by his Almighty Power, to gather together those parts of which the Body was composed, when he shall marshal and dispose those *Atoms* into the same Order they were placed in at first, and unite them to the same Reasonable Soul, then the Man doth properly undergo a *Resurrection*. For it is not enough
to

Gen. 3.
19.

to believe that the Bodies of Men which are committed to the Grave, do not utterly perish, but shall be quickned again (as the Corn which is sown in the Ground) for we are bound farther to believe, that every Man shall arise with his own Body, with the very same Flesh wherein he lived, that he may receive his Doom according to his deeds done in his Body, whether it be good or whether it be evil. This is that *Resurrection* which every good Christian ought to believe, since 'tis plainly revealed to us in the Holy Scripture, and implies no contradiction to the Rules of unbiass'd or unprejudiced Reason; which is what I shall endeavour to make out.

3. That the Belief of such a *Resurrection*, is agreeable not only to the *Canon* of the Holy Scripture, but to the strictest Laws and Rules

Σαρξὸς ἀνάστασις
καὶ σώτηρ,
Carnis re-
surrectio-
nem.
La resur-
rection de
la chair,
De Wed-
cropstand-
inge des
deelches.

Rules of Reason; both which are necessary to be prov'd. For tho' we should prove that the *raising of the dead* implies no Contradiction, or was never so agreeable to the Rules of Reason; yet since 'tis acknowledged that it exceeds the power of Nature, and can be effected by God alone; therefore if God had not declared that he would *raise the dead*, we should have no sure Foundation of our Faith: On the other hand, if we should collect from Scripture, by probable Arguments, that there would be a *Resurrection* of the Body, yet if it implied any contradiction to common Sense, or the Principles of sound Reasoning, we could not yield our firm Assent to it. And therefore I shall prove from Scripture

1. That there will be a true and proper *Resurrection*.

2. That

2. That all Men shall be *raised up* at the last day,

3. That they shall be *raised up* in the same Bodies in which they lived.

And then in the next place I shall consider, what the great Masters of Reason have to say against it.

1. That there will be a true and proper *Resurrection* of the Body. In the Old Testament this Truth was but darkly revealed, and for the most part only shadowed out to the *Jews*, who did not generally believe it, and therefore Interpret those Texts which we Christians bring for the proof of it out of the Old Testament, in a different Sense, or at least not in so great a latitude as to denote a general *Resurrection*. Thus when 'tis said in *Job*, *I know that* ^{Job. 19. 25, 26.} *my Redeemer lives, and that he shall*
S stand

stand at the latter day upon the Earth, and tho' after my skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God. They make these Words to be only a prediction of Job's restauration to his former prosperous Condition; or else to relate only to the happiness of another Life in general, without any reference to the Resurrection of the Body; how justly I shall not at present stay to determine. The Argument which our Blessed Saviour made use of against the Sadducees was, *Argumentum ad hominem*.

EXO. 3. 6. *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: God*

MAT. 22. 32 *is not the God of the dead, but of the living, which supposes some promises to be made good to them, which they had not received in this Life. The clearest place seems*

DAN. 12. 2. *to be that of Daniel. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the Earth*

Earth shall awake, some to everlasting Life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. But this also the Jews seek to evade, by saying that 'tis only meant of their Deliverance from their Oppression by *Antiochus*. But in the New Testament, 'tis plainly revealed to us, and some whole Chapters spent on this Argument. Nay, this Article of our Faith, which seems so hard to be born, and difficult to be believed, is demonstrated to our very Senses, and evidenced to us by the most convincing proofs : For our Blessed Saviour, who destroyed Death by dying for us, has raised us up to the hopes of Everlasting Life, to Glory and Immortality, by raising himself from the dead. This he hath confirm'd to us by unquestionable proofs, by the evidence of the Apostles, Saints and Martyrs, who all una-

Sermon Seventh.

nimously agreed in asserting this Truth, and Sealed their Testimony with their Blood. So that we *Christians* have no reason any longer to doubt of the *Resurrection* of the dead, but pass on to prove

2. That all Men shall be *raised up* at the last day. for there has been some doubt made whether the wicked shall rise to Everlasting Life. The *Jews* of Old, who had but dark Revelations of a future Life called it in Question; and many who call themselves *Christians*, and yet *live like the Beasts that perish*, are in great hopes that *their Souls shall vanish into the soft Air*, and their Bodies forever remain an undistinguished lump of that Clay, from whence they were taken, and that they shall never be united again to their Souls; to be punished for their evil deeds. The *Old Testament* is indeed very scanty

Sermon Seventh.

261

scanty in the proof of a General Resurrection : But the New is plain and evident as to this matter. 'Twas there, *that God brought Life and Immortality to Light*, and made a clearer Revelation, not only of our Duty, but of the means and motives for the attainment of it. We shall there find (in the *Holy Gospel* I mean) that not only both good and bad will be *raised up* at the last day, but that every particular Person will stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, that *as in Adam all died, so in Christ all shall be made alive* : And to name one place instead of all the rest : *The hour is coming, in which all that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.* Every Book of the New Testament

² Tim. 1.

^{10.}

¹ Cor. 15.
^{22.}

John 5.
^{28, 29.}

ment is full of Proofs to this purpose, and therefore I shall insist no longer on this head, but proceed to shew

3. That all Men shall be *raised* with the same Bodies in which they lived. And indeed here lies the main difficulty; for many who allow of a general *Resurrection*, yet differ in their Notions concerning the manner of it; the Dead shall *be raised*, they grant, but not with the same Bodies in which they lived; this they think is absolutely impossible. And therefore I shall consider this Point more distinctly, and by removing this stumbling-block, endeavour to render this Fundamental Article of our Faith concerning the *Resurrection* of the Body more plain and intelligible. And if in the performance of this difficult task I tread out of the common Path, yet I shall

shall advance no *Hypothesis*, but what tends to promote Piety, Holiness, and Vertue, and answers all the Ends of Religion. And

1. I shall endeavour to prove, That all Men shall be *raised up* with the same Bodies in which they lived.

2. I shall shew wherein this sameness, or identity of Body doth consist.

1. That all Men shall be *raised up* with the same Bodies in which they lived, is plain, even from the general Notion of a *Resurrection*. For since a *Resurrection* denotes a Reunion of the Body with the Soul, A Reunion doth suppose, that the same Body which was Buried, shall be *raised up* again. But the strongest Arguments are to be taken from the Holy Scripture, which is very plain in this Point; for we are told *that the Graves shall give* Rev. 20.
up their Dead; now the Graves ^{13.}

can give up that only which was deposited to their safe keeping, which is the Body, *for the Soul re-*
 Eccl. 12.7. *turns to God who gave it.* And the Reason why the Body will be *raised up*, makes it evident, that the same Body must be *raised up*. For the Apostle tells us, *That we*
 2 Cor. 5. *must all appear before the Judgment*
 10. *Seat of Christ, and then gives us the Reason, That every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad.* Now the Body cannot be justly punished or rewarded, unless 'tis the same Body which did either good or evil. This our Blessed Saviour confirmed by *raising up* the same Body, with the same Marks and Signatures which it had before it died. And when the Graves were opened at our Saviours Crucifixion; *many*
 10. *Bodies of Saints which slept arose,*
 and

and came out of their Graves; which were certainly the same Bodies which were buried in them. And therefore the Primitive Christians took so much care to preserve the Bodies of their Friends and Relations, by Embalming them, and wrapping them up in choice and precious Perfumes, and laying them up in the safest Repositories they could find out. And the Heathens, in derision of their belief of the Resurrection of the same Body, gave them to be devoured by Wild Beasts, or else burnt them, and scattered their Ashes abroad; thinking this an effectual means to defeat their Expectation of a Resurrection. But we have not so learned Christ. And therefore I shall proceed, and consider

2. Wherein this sameness or Identity of Body doth consist. And first, I shall consider what others

thers have said concerning it, and then lay down my own Conjectures. And

1. The most common Opinion is, That the same numerical Particles of Matter which composed the Body before the *Resurrection*, shall also make up the Body after 'tis raised from the Dead; but then they are at a loss to give a satisfactory Answer to these following Objections.

1. If the same numerical *Atoms* of which the Body consisted before the *Resurrection*, are required to constitute the same Body after the *Resurrection*, then how is it possible that those *Atoms* or Particles, which have composed and made up many Bodies, should belong particularly to any one of them. For if there are *Canibals* in the World, and the same Particles of Matter which compose one human Body

at

at one time, pass afterwards into the substance and nourishment of another, and so into a third; to what Body do these Particles belong, which have successively been the constituent parts of many Bodies? But if the force of this Argument should be evaded, by a denial of the matter of Fact, and the Stories of *Canibals* should be look'd upon as Fabulous; or it should be said, that the constituent parts of a Man, never pass into nourishment: Yet 'tis evident that all Material Beings are in a continual Flux and Motion, every thing increases and decays by insensible steps and alterations; the Internal parts of every Material Being are always in Motion, and never enjoy an absolute and total Rest. No, they undergo some change or other every Moment, and the most solid Parts of our Body, either

ther increase or decay continually. For Augmentation and Diminution are performed by the Addition and Subtraction of small, and Minute parts, and after such an Insensible manner, that at the same time that Nourishment is conveyed to any part of the Body, some other Particles are subtracted from it; and therefore there cannot be any such constituent parts of the Body, that do not continually undergo some alteration, and every moment either increase or decay. And if so, then how is it possible that the same Particles of Matter, which have belonged to so many human Bodies, should be appropriated to any one of them? 'Tis said, that in some Islands the Earth is so thin and shallow, that in process of time, there may be more human Bodies buried in them, than there is Earth to co-

ver

ver them : But whether this is so or no, yet we must needs confess, that in a long Circulation of Matter, those Particles can never be appropriated to any one distinct Body, which have been the Constituent parts of so many. Besides

2. This Opinion seems to lean upon a weak and tottering Supposition. For the Reason which is assign'd, why the same numerical Particles of Matter should be collected together again at the General *Resurrection*, is this. That the same Person who Sinned, might receive Punishment, or who did well, might be Rewarded; and that the Body which was partaker in the good or evil, might be so also in the Reward or Punishment. Now 'tis plain, first, that a Body, as such, is neither capable of sinning or doing well; and if it could, yet,

yet, Secondly, 'Tis impossible that a Body composed of the same Particles, could either be Punished or Rewarded. First, a Body, as such, is neither capable of sinning or doing well, because 'tis the consent of the Will alone (which is a Faculty of the Rational Soul) which gives being to Sin. This is evident, because those Creatures which have only Vegetative or Sensitive Beings cannot be guilty of Sin. And as the Body, considered separately from the Soul, cannot be guilty of Sin; so neither is it capable of Punishment. For all Punishment being a sensitive Evil, can be inflicted only on such Beings as are endowed with Sense. Now the Body considered separate from the Soul, is not sensible, and therefore 'tis only an improper way of speaking, when we say that the Eye sees, and the Ear hears,

hears, and the Fingers feel; when in truth the Eye is only the Instrument by which the Soul sees, the Ear the Instrument by which the Soul hears, and the Fingers the Instruments by which the Soul feels. Secondly, suppose the Body were capable of Rewards and Punishments, yet how impossible is it that the same particles of Matter should be both Rewarded and Punished, as they ought to be (according to this *Hypothesis*) in both these Cases : Either when the same Particles have entered into the Composition of the Bodies both of good and bad Men : Or, when the same Man has been both good and wicked in the different stages of his Life : In both these Cases it will be very difficult to account for, if not impossible to explain, how the same Bodies should receive the Rewards, both of their good and evil

evil Deeds. These and many other such like Difficulties do so necessarily follow from this Supposition, That ~~that same~~ Body, which will be *raised up* at the last day, will be composed of the same material Particles which constituted his Body in his Life time; that several Learned Men not being able to loose these knotty Objections, have been forced to cut them asunder, and boldly to affirm

2. That to the Sameness or Identity of a Body, 'tis only necessary that there should be the same Soul; so that whatsoever Body shall be *raised up* at the last day, yet if 'tis informed by the same Soul, 'tis the same Body. The Body (say they) is only the Instrument by which the Soul performs its Operations, but the Soul is the Man; the Soul is only capable of
Sense,

Sense, Pleasure and Pain, and by Consequence of Rewards and Punishments. But these Men seem not to have sufficiently considered, that the Body is not only an Instrument, but 'tis also a constituent Part of a Man; and that there is a Vital union between it and the Soul. So that as there are many Sins which cannot be committed without the Body; so are there many Punishments which cannot affect the Soul but by the Body.

He that committeth Fornication, sinneth against his own Body (as the Apostle assures us) and the like may be said of gluttony, and drunkenness, which are called in the Holy Scripture, Lusts of the Flesh, because they derive their Original from the bodily Appetites and fleshly Desires. Besides, if it were possible for the same Soul to pass into different Bodies (which is an

¹ Cor. 6.
18.

T

Opinion

Opinion which has prevailed over the greatest part of the World) yet they would not be the same Men. For the Man doth result from the Conjunction of a Reasonable Soul with a human Body; and were it possible to transmit a Rational Soul into a brutish Body, it might constitute a different Species of *Animals*, but never would produce a Man. In this Condition have most Authors I have read, left the Argument; nor should I have adventured to pass by the *Ultima Thule* of the Ancients, but only from this Consideration; That there might probably be found out a middle way between both these Opinions, which might be equally agreeable to the Analogy of Faith, subservient to the Ends of Piety and Religion, and yet not lie liable to the same Difficulties and Objections. Which is

3 That

3. That the Sameness and Identity of the Body after the *Resurrection*, with the Body before its dissolution, doth consist in the sameness of Constitution and Temperament of Body ; which doth result chiefly from the disposition and figure of those parts which compose it. So that whatsoever Particles a Mans Body is composed of after the *Resurrection*, yet if they are set in the same order, and disposed after the same manner, not only as to External Site, figure and proportion ; but as to Internal propension also, and informed with the same Soul, it is the same Man. For let us consider, what it is wherein Bodies differ : Dead Bodies differ from one another only in the different position of Parts ; but living Bodies in their different Temperaments, Dispositions, Inclinations, Passions, and Tenden-

cies : And hereby we may the more easily determine wherein the Identity of Bodies doth consist. To make this more plain, 'tis agreed on all hands, that our State of Life in this World, is a State of Probation ; our great business here is to govern our Passions and Appetites by the Rules of right Reason, and to subject the Body to the Soul ; and our Happiness in another World, will in a great measure consist in the perfection of those vertuous Habits we have contracted in this Life. Now when a good Man (for Example) has such a Body given to him at the *Resurrection*, with the same Figure and disposition of Parts, the same Inclinations and Tendencies, which he had in this World (tho' much refined and perfected) 'tis the same Body (when informed with the same Soul) tho' it

it should not be composed of the same Numerical Particles of Matter: as a Man is the same Man in his Old Age, he was in his Infancy, tho' there is not one Particle of his Body the same. For if (as some Excellent Writers suppose) Men carry their Inclinations and Dispositions into the other World along with them; and these Dispositions and Inclinations do depend upon the make and temperament of the Body, it seems very probable, That the Identity of the Body after the *Resurrection*, with that before its Dissolution should consist chiefly in the Figure, Proportion and disposition of Parts; from whence the same Qualities and Inclinations will result. We are told, *Mores animæ sequuntur temperamentum corporis*, and the Temperament of the Body doth result from the various figure and dispo-

sition of Parts. Not that there is an absolute necessity for a Man of such a Temperament to be guilty of such particular Sins, but only to be more inclined to those Sins than others ; and 'tis the business of Sanctified Reason to subdue these Inclinations; and God has promised to give us his Grace and Assistance to this End, which will effectually enable us to perform this difficult task, if we make a right use and improvement of it. And when this is done, and there is this effect produced in the Inclinations and Habits of the Soul, there is also an Alteration wrought on the Body ; which, when Glorified, is more fitted and prepared for the reception of Pious and Devout Thoughts, more ready to perform good Actions, and more susceptible of Everlasting Joys. And when such a Body as this is
raised

raised up at the last Day, 'tis not only the same Body as to all the Intents of Piety and Vertue; but the same Natural Body, as having its parts muster'd up by the Omnipotent Power of God, like a well Disciplined Army in the same Order; the same Rank and File (if I may so express it) they were in before.

God grant that we may all be so mindful of this Article of our Faith; that by dying to Sin and rising to Righteousness in this Life, we may be fitted and disposed for a Joyful and Happy Resurrection to Eternal Happiness in the Life to come.

28 JY 58

The End of the Seventh Sermon.

STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000
STP 2000 2000 2000

S E R M O N VIII.

Acts 17. 22. *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill and said, Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too Superstitious.*

THese Words are the beginning of a Sermon which St. *Paul* Preached to the *Athenians*, the Occasion of which was as follows.

St. *Paul* coming to *Athens*, and perceiving the *Athenians* to be Men of a Liberal Education, and Ingenious

nious Disposition, very inquisitive into Religious Rites and Observances, and ready to comply with such of them as they thought would render the Deity propitious to them ; was inflamed with a holy Zeal towards them, and very desirous to do them good, by bringing them to the Knowledge of the Truth, and the Worship of the True God ; as appears from the 16. *ver.* of this Chapter. *Now whilst Paul waited for them at Athens,* (i. e.) *Silas and Timotheus, his Spirit was stirred up in him, when he saw the City wholly given to Idolatry.* And therefore he took all occasions of disputing with Devout and well disposed Persons, whether *Jews* or *Heathens* ; with the one in their Synagogues, with the other in their Market-places, *ver.* 17. And because the main impediment of their Conversion, lay

lay in that vain Confidence which they had in the Science and Learning of their *Philosophers*, the *Epicureans* and *Stoicks*; he takes them to task, *ver.* 18. and Preaches to them *Jesus* & the *Resurrection*. Now these Men tho' bred up in the study of Nature, and very eminent for their skill in Moral Philosophy, yet were so ignorant in Spiritual matters, and so little skill'd in the Doctrines and Tenents of the Christian Religion, that they looked upon *Jesus* and the *Resurrection* to be two new Gods, whom *Paul* adored; and therefore, *ver.* 19. they took *Paul* and brought him to *Areopagus* (*i. e.*) a place of Judicature in *Athens*, where all those who proposed any thing concerning the Worship of the Gods were to be Judged. *Paul* having liberty given him to speak for himself, begins his Defence with these Words

Words of the Text. *Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too Superstitious.*

To the clearer understanding of these Words, it will be necessary to make these two Enquiries.

1. What is the true Notion of *Superstition* in the general.

2. In what Sense 'tis taken in the Text.

1. What is the true Notion of *Superstition* in general. Now the Word in the Original *δεισιδαιμονία* which is here Translated *Superstition*, signifies only the fear of the Gods; and may be taken either in a good, or evil Sense, tho' generally 'tis taken in a good one; for such a fear of God, as engages us to Worship and Obey him. When 'tis taken in an evil Sense, it imports such a slavish fear of the Divine Nature, as leads us into a mistake, either concerning the
Object

Object of our Worship, or the manner of performing of it ; and therefore Men are then said to be *Superstitious*, when having an Aw and Dread of a Supream Being, and a good intention of serving him, yet either entertain absurd Notions of the Divine Essence, or of the way and manner of Worshipping him. *Maximus Tyrius* Dissert. 4. gives this account of it, that there is the same difference between a good Man, and a *Superstitious* Person, as there is between a Friend and a Flatterer; the Pious person having possessed his Mind with the Goodness of Gods Nature, comes to him without Fear ; the *Superstitious* having only an Aw of Gods Majesty, and dread of his Power, fear the Gods as so many Tyrants. This is a Partial Description of *Superstition*, expressing that Pan-nick Fear which possesses the Minds of

Clem. Alex.
Strem. lib.
7.

of the Superstitious ; but 'tis more fully described by *Clemens Alexandrinus*. Ignorance (says he) has two extrems, *Atheism* and *Superstition* ; the first has no Religion at all, the other has too much ; either worshipping Dæmons and created Beings instead of God, or the true God after a false and mistaken manner. This being the Notion of *Superstition* in the General, I come to consider

2. In what Sense 'tis taken here in the Text, when St. *Paul* told the *Athenians*, *Ye Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too Superstitious*. Now 'tis plain upon the first view, that *Superstition* here is taken in an evil Sense ; because St. *Paul* blames the *Athenians* for being thus *superstitious* ; tho' he binds up his reproof in as gentle terms as possibly he can, that he might make them more inclinable

clinable to hearken to his advice, and more capable of receiving benefit by it; for he only tells them, that they were too much inclin'd or addicted to be *superstitious*, and mollifies his expression with the Particle (ὥς) for 'tis ὥς δεισιδαιμονίας ἔργα ὑμῶν θεωρῶ, as if he was not certain of the thing, but had only some reason to suspect it; tho' 'tis evident that they were faulty, both with respect to the Object of their Worship, and the manner of performing of it. As to the Object of their Worship, they were faulty in all these particulars, 1. They worshipped false Gods. 2. Many Gods. 3. Unknown Gods (*i. e.*) Gods of whose Nature and Properties they had no certain Knowledge. And if so, then they must needs Err. 2. As to the manner of their Worship; for they worshipped them with such extravagant Rites

Sermon Eighth.

Rites and ridiculous Ceremonies, as very ill became the Majesty and Wisdom of the Supream Being to receive, or Man to give.

Having thus prepared my way, by Explaining these two Points, I shall shew

1. In what particulars *Superstition* amongst us Christians doth chiefly consist.

2. From whence this *superstitious* Temper doth proceed.

3. What dangerous effects *Superstition* doth produce.

4. By what means we may best discover it in our selves.

5. Which are the most proper Methods to prevent its taking possession of our Minds, and of freeing our selves from it.

6. I shall make some Inferences.

1. In what particulars *Superstition* amongst Christians doth chiefly consist. The *Athenians* were Heathens,

Heathens, and had only the Light of Nature for their guide, and therefore 'tis no wonder that they err'd, both as to the Object, and manner of their Worship; for tho' right reason would have inform'd them, that there could be but one Infinite and Eternal Spiritual Being, and that this Spirit must be Worshipped in Spirit and in Truth: Yet, Reason deprav'd, must needs be dazled by the Contemplation of so glorious an Object; and like a false light, lead them out of their way, or at least fail in giving them sufficient Instruction after what manner they ought to address themselves to him. And therefore 'tis no wonder, if thus seeking after God in the dark, they miss't their way, and were not able to find out what they diligently enquired after. From whence we may easily collect, how absolutely

U

neces-

fary, Divine Revelation is to rectifie Mens Notions, and to point out to them the way they ought to walk in; the only Wonder is, that we Christians, who enjoy this glorious Light, should Err so grossly, and be guilty of such notorious *Superstition*; and that in these following particulars.

1. In mistaking the Object of Divine Worship. There are many who call themselves Christians, whose Religion has degenerated into the grossest sort of Heathenism, by ascribing that Worship to Saints and Angels, which is due to God alone. This is *Superstition*, in the most gross and notorious Sense; the Word *Superstitio*, being as some think, deriv'd from *Superstes*; because it was usual with the Heathens to Worship their deceased Kings and Parents, and the most eminent Benefactors to Mankind:

kind : Thus the *Papists* pay Adoration to Saints and Angels, and look upon them as an Inferiour sort of Deities, to whom they ought to pay their Homage, and make their Addresses. 'Tis true, they pretend to make some distinction, and say, that they give to God alone, the highest kind of Worship, and that they offer up to Saints and Angels, only a Worship inferiour to this; which certainly must needs be highly blameable, because they themselves are forc'd to confess, that 'tis Religious; such a Worship as receives no Countenance from the *Sacred Text*; nay, is directly contrary to many plain Precepts contained in it. And tho' Learned Men may pretend to understand the difference between them, by the help of a nice Distinction; yet those who have not this subtilty of Discerning (who are

much the greater Number) Err most grossly, and mistake the Object of their Devotion.

2. Those who place the main of Religion in the performance of those Duties which God has appointed as the Means for the obtaining of true Vertue and Holiness, and to convey his Grace into the Soul, are guilty of *Superstition*. The Rule of our Religion is the Word of God, which if diligently studied, will direct us plainly what we ought to do, and what to forbear; but yet, it will be of great use carefully to observe, which are the Moral, and which are the Instituted parts of our Duty; the one being of Eternal and necessary Obligation, and the other enjoined us, but at certain times, and only as Instruments for the attainment of those vertuous Habits, and Moral
Endow-

Endowments, in which the great Lines of our Duty do consist. But when Men lay so much stress upon the Exercises of Instituted Religion, as to occasion the neglect of the more weighty and necessary parts of their Duty, and hereby undermine the very Foundation of Moral Vertue, this is to be *Superstitious*. To make this plain I shall give an Instance or two. The Observation of the *Sabbath* was one of the principal Points of Instituted Religion amongst the *Jews*; but yet our Saviour Christ himself tells us, that this positive Institution ought to give place to the Duties of Natural Religion, to Works of Justice or Mercy; so that if a Beast fell into a Pit, or any necessary Work was to be done, the punctual Observation of the *Sabbath* was then to be omitted. And thus amongst us

Christians, hearing the Word, Prayer, and receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, are indeed such Ordinances of Religion as are absolutely necessary to be performed; tho' not for themselves, and on their own account, but only in order to obtain some farther End, *viz.* the Grace and Assistance of God, and the begetting in our Minds such good Dispositions and Christian Vertues, as may render us more like God, more Holy, Just, and Good, and by Consequence better disposed and prepared for the Happiness of another Life. For, as under the Law God declared to the *Jews*, that he abhorred their Sacrifices, because they were an Abomination to him, when performed by wicked Men, and divested of Moral Goodness: so under the *Gospel*, the bare Exercise of Religious Duties will be of no use to
us,

us, nor will they be acceptable unto God, unless offered up with a pure Mind and sanctified Heart.

3. Such who doat on the Inventions of their own Brain, which are no where commanded by God, and lay too great a weight and stress upon the Rites and Ceremonies of Religion, multiplying them without Reason, and esteeming the Omission of them a greater Sin, than the Violation of the Law of God, are highly guilty of *Superstition*. For hereby they undermine the more necessary and vital parts of Religion, and reduce the Spiritual Worship of God into external Pomp and Shew ; they call off, and divert the Mind from the Object to the Circumstance, and return again to the Infant-state of the *Jewish* Church. Thus the *Pharisees* of Old by their Traditions, and the *Papists* by their

innumerable Rites and insignificant Ceremonies, not only put a Clog upon their Devotions, but corrupt and deprave the Worship of God. And that this is so, will plainly appear, from the consideration of the End and Design of Divine Worship; both with relation to God, and with relation to our selves. With relation to God, Divine Worship was Instituted, that we might pay him that Homage and Adoration which is due from a Creature to a Creator; with relation to our selves, that we might furnish our Minds with those good Dispositions which are requisite to make us both Holy and Happy; that our Confession of Sin may make us more humble, our Deprecation more Penitent, our Intercession more Charitable, and our Thanksgiving more grateful to him for all his Benefits and Mercies bestowed

stowed upon us. Now when our Minds are taken up with the Pageantry of a splendid and formal Worship, with the foppery of insignificant and ludicrous Rites; 'tis impossible that we should fix our Attention, either upon the Object of our Worship, or the Subject of our Devotions; and by Consequence our Worship must needs degenerate into Formality and *Superstition*. 'Tis true, there is no Action but must be performed with some Ceremonies, in some Gesture, Time and Place; and that for the greater Decency and Solemnity of Gods Worship, an uniformity in these Rites is very requisite, and Praise-worthy; and therefore our first Reformers retained some few of the most Innocent Ceremonies formerly used in the Christian Church. And since the well Government both of the Church and
State,

State, is committed to those whom God has set over us; we are obliged both by the Law of God, and the Law of the Land, to obey them in things either Lawful or indifferent. But whosoever shall Imagine or be perswaded in his Mind, that he merits by the bare performance of the Circumstantials of Religion, or that they make him either a better or a worse Man, he is highly guilty of *Superstition*. There is another sort of *Superstition* directly contrary to this, and that is

4. When a Man thinks every small matter which is imposed upon him, a load insupportable, and that the serving God *in Spirit and in Truth*, excludes all bodily Worship, and the Decencies of our external behaviour; all Conformity to the Injunctions of our Superiours, and the Customs of that particular Church in whose Communion

munion we live. For a Man may be *Superstitious* in being Zealous against Ceremonies, as well as for them; and whosoever places any great Merit in being either on one side or the other, may be justly taxed of this Sin. But since it has been observed that the Inhabitants of these Kingdoms, are inclined to Clownishness in Religious Worship, and have been Justly blamed for want of a due regard to such things as have a Relative Holiness in them, and that venerable Solemnity which becomes the performance of Holy Duties; we ought to be the more watchful over our selves, that we do not fall into this extream. For that Man who is so scrupulous as to admit of nothing in the Worship of God, but what he finds plainly directed in the Holy Scripture, takes away all Christian Liberty, and makes
that

1 Cor. 14.
4^o. that excellent Rule of doing all things decently and in order, of none Effect: For this general Rule was set down to no purpose, if all the particulars which ought to be observed in Divine Worship, had been distinctly enumerated in the *Holy Writ*. And therefore there can be no more dangerous *Superstition*, than for a Man to be too scrupulous in matters indifferent, and to desire more plain proofs and demonstrative Arguments, for the Expediency of every Usage of the Church, than he can give for the disuse of it. Such a Man prepossesses his Mind with ill-grounded and *superstitious* fears, and then will not have patience to hearken to such Reasons as would shew him the folly of them; everything which is not the Creature of his own fancy, displeases and frights him, and when he has once put himself

himself out of Conceit with the publick Worship, he falls to Modelling and contriving a new one; till at last he becomes so vain as to fall in love with his own shadow, and so sacrilegious as to steal heavenly Fire, to animate the work of his own Brain; and for fear of falling into imaginary *Superstition*, falls down and worships an Idol of his own contriving. This is most egregious Folly, and yet such as well-meaning Men are too often guilty of : And therefore it may be worth our while to search for the Source from whence it Issues, and the Springs which give it motion, and to consider

2. From whence this *Superstitious* Temper doth proceed. And for the most part it may be assigned to one of these following Causes.

1. *Superstition* doth generally pro-

proceed from a weakness of Judgment. For when Men have a vigorous Zeal for Religion, and a warmth of Affection, and yet have not their Judgments sufficiently informed, nor are ~~they~~ able to distinguish between things absolutely necessary, [&] those which are only expedient, and those which are in themselves indifferent, and may be either done or let alone; they will be apt to fall into *Superstition*, by placing the main of Religion in smaller matters, and by being over Zealous for the Mint, and Anise, *Math. 23.* and Cummin, things of little consequence, tho' they neglect the weightier matters of the Law of God.

2. *Superstition* proceeds frequently from Mens entertaining wrong Notions of God. And this is the natural consequence of the former, for weakness of Judgment gives too much Scope to the Imaginative

ginitive Faculty, and induces Men to cloath God with their own Passions, and to fancy him *such an one as themselves* ; and when Mens Minds are once prepossessed with false Notions of the Object of their Worship, it must needs derive an Influence on all their Religious Acts. When Men of a Timorous and Melancholy Constitution, have settled this Notion of God in their Minds, that he is an Austere and Rigid Being, who takes pleasure in the misery of his poor Creatures, *and willingly aff-* Lam. 3.
licts the Children of Men ; they ^{33.} will be apt to think to please him with Flatteries and little Compliances, and to appease his anger by *afflicting their Bodies for the Sin of their Souls* ; they will find out many little and ridiculous Devices to quiet an angry Conscience within, and to render propitious an Offended

fended God without ; for 'tis the Ignorance of the goodness of Gods Nature, his Inclination to make all manner of Beings happy, according to their different Capacities, and to supply them with all the good things they can possibly receive, which causes these Perplexities and Consternations of Mind, which many well-meaning People, but of weak Intellectuals, labour under, as to matters of no great moment, and yet such as are sufficient to render their Lives uneasy and uncomfortable to them.

3. Superstition has many times its rise from Mens Sloth and Laziness. There are many Men who would willingly be happy in another Life, and yet will not be at the pains to be really Good and Vertuous in this ; they would get to Heaven, and obtain eternal Happiness, if they could do it on
easie

easy terms; but if their Salvation must be wrought out with difficulty, and requires great pains and diligence to effect it, this they are not willing to undergo. They find that an Appearance of Religion is beneficial and creditable, and therefore they think to please God, and to keep up their Reputation with Men, by their compliance with the out-side, and Formalities, the Pomp and Splendor of Divine Worship; and instead of living Righteously, Soberly and Godly, they will Substitute some external Observances, some slight Penance, Indulgences, and Pilgrimages; and in the room of the *New Creature made after the Image of God*, a Creature of their own Contriving; such things as have a shew of Wisdom and Sanctity indeed, but in truth have nothing of Real and Vital Religion

in them. For to attain Moral Goodness, to be Humble, Meek, Just, Good, and Charitable, to perform a sincere and universal Obedience, to resign up our selves, and all our concerns to Gods disposal, to mortifie our best beloved Vices, and even our Tendencies and Inclinations to Sin and Vanity, this is to change our Natures, *to cut off right Hands, and pluck out right Eyes,* and will cost a Man much pains and labour at the first. 'Tis a difficult thing to root out an evil Habit, or to unlearn an evil Disposition : But to make a shew and appearance of Religion, to perform Religious Exercises, to Join with the Congregation in the Instituted Rites of Religion, and the Publick Forms of Devotion, and to abstain from Meats; these things are more easie to be done : besides, they lie open to the Eye
of

of the World, and are Encouraged, and sufficiently Rewarded too, by the Praise and Commendation of Men.

4 Superstition doth sometimes proceed from Mens allowing themselves in some one Bosom Sin. For when Mens Fears are awakened, by the sense of their guilt, and the apprehension of their danger, and yet are not willing to forgo the sinful Pleasures of this Life ; they will endeavour to Compound the matter between God and their Lusts, they will give God only the out-side and Appearance, they will *hear the Word gladly*, and perhaps, *do many things* contained therein, and be more than ordinary diligent and zealous in some parts of their Duty, and over strict, and over righteous in the lesser and easier matters of Religion ; that hereby they may (as

they think) bribe God to allow them in their darling Vice, and conceal their Wickedness from the Eyes of Men; and from hence have proceeded many of those *superstitious* Observances, which have been introduced into the Christian Church. And now having found out the chief and principal Causes of this Spreading and almost Epidemical evil of *Superstition*: I proceed to consider

3. The dangerous Nature of *Superstition*, or the ill Consequences which naturally ensue from it.

1. *Superstition* is an Inlet in Atheism, for by begetting into Mens Minds a base and servile Fear of God; it produces such an unworthy *Idea* of him, as inclines them first to wish, and then to conclude; That there is no such Being: For it cloaths God with such Passions, as 'twere a Sin to imitate;
and

and all its Reverence which it pays to him, is derived from the fear of that mischief we think he will do us; so that by ^{erasing.} ~~reading~~ the true and amiable Notion of a God out of the Minds of Men, it tends to banish him out of our Hearts first; and by Consequence, the belief of his Being out of the World.

2. Superstition is a Vice which is with great difficulty rooted out of the Minds of Men, when once it has got possession of them; because first, 'tis no easie matter to discover it; and secondly, when 'tis found out, 'tis with great difficulty conquered and subdued. Its likeness to true Piety, conceals it from our notice. The Devil under *Samuels* Mantle passes for a Prophet, and 'tis too usual for Men to deceive others and themselves too, by an outward Appearance, and seeming Zeal for Piety

and Religion ; and when this evil Habit has been introduced by little and little, by flow steps, and insensible degrees, 'twill require much pains and labour to conquer and subdue it. An openly prophane and wicked Man is condemned by his own Conscience, and may probably one time or other become sensible of his Folly ; but the *superstitious* Person has his Judgment deprav'd, and it must needs be a difficult matter, to perswade a Man he is in the wrong, who is so confident he is in the right. I do not say, that a *superstitious* Person is a worse Man than one who is openly wicked and debauched ; but 'tis evident, that he is with greater difficulty convinced of his Error, and reclaim'd. And I have the Observation of *Solomon* long ago to back my Assertion, *seest thou a Man Wise in his own*

Prov. 26.
12.

own conceit? there is more hope of a Fool than of him.

3. Superstition is generally the Cloak to some Fundamental Error in Doctrine, or Damning Sin in practice. *Latet anguis in herba*, there always lurks some Evil, under this specious shew of Piety and Religion. Thus in the Popish Church, whilst they amuse Mens Minds with the Pomp of a gaudy & Ceremonious Worship, they introduce *damnable Doctrines*, and give such Liberties in Manners, as are inconsistent with the pure and holy Precepts of the Christian Religion. And thus amongst us *Protestants*, 'tis too common for those who are over-strict Observers of such things as are of little moment in Religion, and make more than ordinary Pretences to Piety and Devotion, to fall into the Pit of the most scandalous Immoralities.

Sermon Eighth.

ties. And now since *Superstition* is so dangerous an Evil, and yet for the most part concealed from our Notice, we have great Reason to consider

4. By what means we may come to the Knowledge of it, both in our selves and others. And this I shall attempt by these plain Rules.

1. Let us consider whether we are not too scrupulous, and lay too great a stress upon things of little Concernment in Religion. Whether we do not perplex and trouble our selves, because we have not been exact in some Punctilios of our Duty, because we have not prayed just so long, or so often as we used to do; or because we have broke in upon some Rules of Devotion, which we have imposed upon our selves, tho' perhaps our remissness in greater Matters

ters pass by unregarded. And therefore when we find our selves so much concerned about these things of less Importance, let us ask our selves such Questions as these. Are we as careful in furnishing our Souls with all Christian Graces, and in yeilding a ready Obedience to all the Commands of God, as we are in practising these smaller Matters? Is there no Lust remains unmortified, no Sin unrepented of? For 'tis a usual Stratagem of the Devil, to beat an Alarm at some distant Post, when he designs to draw us off from the defence of that Breach, where he intends to assault us.

2. Let us consider whether we mortifie only the Lusts of the Flesh, whilst we harbour and caress the Lusts of the Spirit. For let Men pretend to never so much Temperance and Sobriety, Justice
and

and Honesty, Piety and Devotion; yet if they live in Envy, Malice, Uncharitableness, Back-bitings, Cenforiousness, and Spiritual Pride; if they suffer themselves to be led Captive by their spiritual Lusts, or hanker sollicitously and inordinately after the Wealth and Grandeur of the World, if they are great Lovers of themselves, making haste to be Rich, and pursuing Worldly Advantages and Interests, with as much craft and policy, eagerness and unsatisfied desires as the most greedy Worldling; all their pretences to Religion are vain, and their zeal will degenerate into *Superstition*. For true and genuine Religion transforms the Mind and Soul of a Man into the Love of God, and Charity to his Neighbour; but *Superstition* only regulates and influences the outward Action; like the hand of a
faulty

faulty Watch, which is moved by the finger to the hour of the day; whilst a good one is directed from the spring within.

3. Let us consider whether our Obedience proceeds out of a principle of Love, or a principle of Fear only. For if we serve God only out of Fear of his Punishments, 'tis highly probable that this slavish Fear will draw us aside into many *superstitious* Observances. It must be confess'd, that *the Fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom*; Pro. 9. 10. 'tis generally the Fear of Hell Torments which prevails with Men to forsake an evil course of Life, for 'tis *knowing the Terrors of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. *that we perswade Men*, and this will Influence a Mans Actions all his Life after. Fear was placed in the in the Soul of Man for this purpose, to keep them from things hurtful and prejudicial to them, and is then

Sermon Eighth.

then only criminal, when it drives Men from God, and occasions the neglect of their Duty to him. But when a Christian is arrived *at the fulness of Stature in the Lord Christ Jesus*, he must be *also rooted and grounded in the Love of God*, and if a Man who for some time has forsook his evil Courses, doth not find the *Love of God spread abroad in his heart*, he has good Reason to suspect, that his Religion is tinctured with that slavish Fear and bitter Zeal, which naturally produce *Superstition*. I would not be mistaken, by the Love of God, I do not mean such a familiar Affection of the Mind, as one Friend bears to another, but a Passion composed of Admiration & Gratitude; Admiration of the wonderful Excellencies and Perfections of God, and Gratitude for those many Blessings and Favours bestowed upon us.

The

The one Contemplates God as the most Excellent Being; the other as our good Friend and Benefactor.

And whosoever is thus affected with the Love of God, will endeavour to be like him, and to

transcribe all his communicable Perfections; he will serve him with

Joyfulness and Humility of Soul, and Worship him with Pleasure and Delight. Whereas the *Superstitious*

Person, who looks upon God as a severe, rigid, and inexorable Being, who takes all opportunities of Afflicting Mankind, & is pleased with their Sighs and Groans, their Miseries and Calamities; must needs Adore him with a forced and constrained Worship, and pay his Homage to him unwillingly; he will give God the Lip and the Knee, but not the Heart; and hereby Mocks God whilst he pretends to Glorifie him. Such an one must ex-

pect

Quis legem
det aman-
tibus? ma-
ior Lex a-
mor est fi-
bi. Boetius
lib. 3. de
Consol.
Phil.

pect a Curse instead of a Blessing, and provokes God to send his severest Judgments upon him, and to turn his Sacrifice into Sin. And therefore I proceed

5. To consider which are the best Methods of avoiding *Superstition*, and freeing ourselves from it.

1. Endeavour to understand thoroughly the Grounds and Foundation of your Religion. For Ignorance is generally the Mother of *Superstition*, not Devotion; and when Men have imbib'd only general and confus'd Notions of God and Religion, they will never be able to make a true Judgment of the necessity or expediency of their Actions, of the Nature of Gods Worship, of the manner how he will be served, or which are the Fundamental Truths, and the most necessary and principal Duties of the Christian Religion; and by
Con-

Consequence will be apt to catch at the Shadow, whilst the Substance flees from, and escapes them.

2. Labour to gain an humble frame and temper of Mind, a Mind sensible of its own wants and frailties; for Pride puffs up, but Humility shews things in their true Light, their due distance, and proportion; It gives us the right Knowledge of our selves, and will inform us what kind of Service God expects, and after what manner a poor dependent Creature ought to address himself to the great Creator and Governour of the World.

3. Let us affect our Minds with right Notions of the Divine Perfections, especially Gods Goodness. Let this Attribute be the subject of our daily Thoughts, and let us imprint this Notion frequently in our Minds; That to be God, and to be Essentially and Infinitely Good,

Sermon Eighth.

Good, is the same thing; and that therefore he must needs intend the well-being of all his Creatures, and desire to communicate Happiness to them, according to their different Capacities to receive it; such Meditations as these will strike at the Root of *Superstition*, and erase out of our Minds such false Notions and Ideas of the Deity, as render him dreadful and terrible to his Creatures.

4. Let us make it our business rather to be really Good, than to appear to be so. Let our chief care be to cultivate our Minds, to purifie our Hearts and Consciences, to be Holy, Just, Merciful, Humble and Peaceable, and when we are once possessed of these Virtues, they will derive a lasting Influence on our outward Behaviour; whereas if we harbour Pride, Malice, Envy, Uncharitableness in
our

our hearts, they will some time or other appear through all the disguises we can possibly put on. A Man may counterfeit Piety and Holiness, and may for some time deceive those *who look only to the outward appearance* ; but God who knows the heart, will look through all these false shews and forms of Devotion, and discern all that Formality and *Superstition* which lurks there: and frequently by some unlucky accident or other, 'tis discovered to Men too. And therefore the best way to appear, and to be thought to be good, is really to be so. And now having proposed the most effectual Means to disengage our Minds from this *superstitious* Temper; It only remains

6. That I conclude with an Inference or two from what has been already delivered.

Y

1. Hence

Sermon Eighth.

i. Hence we may infer that a Man may be as well too Religious, as *Righteous overmuch*. Prudence is a Vertue which must guide our Devotions, as well as our Moral Vertues : For as a Man may be very unjust who keeps up to the Letter of the Law ; so he may be highly *Superstitious*, who is too scrupulous in every Punctilio of his Devotions. Excess in the best things, has the most pernicious Consequences. That Wine which moderately drank, *rejoices the heart of God and Man* ; when abused to Intemperance and Excess, makes Mens heads turn round, and deprives them of their Reason : Such a giddiness is that, which an Ignorant Zeal for Religion produces in the Minds of *Superstitious Men*. There are some Persons so scrupulous, that they render their Lives miserable, and are continually disturbing

sturbing themselves upon every little omission of their Duty, tho' 'tis never so involuntary; they are always poring on their own Faults and Frailties, & condemning themselves to Eternal Misery, for the commission of those Sins which the weakness and frailty of their beings betrays them into, and God has promised to forgive, upon their sincere Repentance. These Men are very apt to believe, the Threatnings of Gods Law; but not to close with the Promises of the Gospel; and employ their Thoughts so much on Gods Justice, that they forget that he is good and merciful too; their Condition must be confest to be extreamly deplorable in this World, but much more comfortable than they are willing to believe, as to the Happiness of the next. The rise of their Misfortunes, for the most part proceeds

ceeds from a Melancholy Constitution of Body, which inclines them to imbibe *Superstitious* thoughts of God, and to entertain unbecoming Notions of his Justice. Were they capable of thinking to their own advantage, I would propose to their Consideration; how much delight God takes in Mercy, how Wise he is to consider, and to make abatement for their unavoidable Infirmities; how much more willing he is to forgive their Sins, and pardon their Offences, and to receive them into Favour, than a mild and gentle Master is to receive his fugitive Servant, or an Indulgent Parent his only Child, upon his submission to him. These are proper Considerations for them, tho' not always successful; and therefore, zealous and fervent Prayers are to be offer'd up to God, that he would
be

be pleased to comfort these drooping Souls, to set home some Truth on their Minds and Consciences, and in his good time, to *Speak Peace to their Souls*. Much more dangerous is the Condition of those who fall into the contrary Extream. And therefore *secondly*, from what has been said, we may learn from whence all that Formality and Hypocrisy, which is too visible amongst all sorts and persuasions of Christians doth proceed. For as Ignorance is the Mother, so Hypocrisy is the Daughter of *Superstition*. Instead of enlarging on this Head, I shall only Quote a Paragraph or two, from the most Reverend Father in God, the late Archbishop of *Canterbury*; you may find it, and more to the same purpose, about the 54. Page of his 6th. Volume of Sermons.

Sermon Eighth.

“ And is it not to be feared that
 “ there are many who fall into
 “ this fatal mistake about Religi-
 “ on, and think that if they do
 “ but serve God in their Families,
 “ and go to Church, and behave
 “ themselves there with Devotion
 “ and Reverence, and at certain
 “ times receive the Sacrament, they
 “ are truly Religious, and very
 “ good Christians? when all this
 “ while they take no care to im-
 “ prove themselves in real Good-
 “ ness, by an inward Conformity
 “ of their Minds to God, and the
 “ real reformation and amendment
 “ of their Lives; by mortifying
 “ their Lusts, and subduing their
 “ Appetites and Passions, to the
 “ Laws of Reason and Religion;
 “ by putting on, as the Elect of God,
 “ Bowels of Kindness; by being
 “ True and Faithful, Righteous
 “ and Just, Patient and Merciful,
 “ as

“ as their Father which is in Hea-
 “ ven is so ; and by forbearing one
 “ another, in case of Provocation,
 “ and forgiving one another even as
 “ God for Christs sake has forgiven
 “ us; by purifying themselves as
 “ God is Pure, and endeavouring
 “ to be Holy in all manner of Con-
 “ versation, as he who hath called
 “ them is Holy ; when all this while
 “ they are Covetous and Earthly-
 “ minded ; and, to serve their Co-
 “ vetousness, will strain a Point
 “ of Truth or Justice, and hard-
 “ ly do an Act of Charity in their
 “ whole Lives, but what is extorted
 “ from them by meer importunity,
 “ or some such urgent necessity, in
 “ point of Decency and Reputa-
 “ tion, that for shame of the
 “ World they know not how to
 “ avoid it : When their Passions are
 “ as fierce and ungovern’d, their
 “ Hearts as full of gall and bitter-
 “ ness,

Sermon Eighth.

“ nefs, their Tongues of slander
 “ and evil-speaking, their Humors
 “ as proud and surly, and censo-
 “ rious, as theirs can be who are
 “ openly Prophane, and seem to
 “ neglect and despise all Religi-
 “ on ; and yet because they make
 “ an external appearance of Piety
 “ and Devotoin, they think, and
 “ are fully perswaded that they are
 “ in the favour of God, and a state
 “ of Grace. Thus this venerable
 Father of our Church.

*God grant that we may all of us
 so practice true Piety, and follow
 after real Holiness, and true and
 substantial Goodness ; that we may
 at last obtain the End of our Hopes,
 the Salvation of our Souls. Amen.*

The End of the Eighth Sermon.

SER.

S E R M O N IX.

Rom. 12. 1. The latter
part of that Verse.

*Which is your Reasonable
Service.*

The whole verse runs
thus

*I beseech you therefore Bre-
thren by the Mercies of God,
that ye present your Bodies
a living Sacrifice, Holy, ac-
ceptable unto God, which is
your Reasonable Service.*

IN the former part of this Epi-
stle, the Apostle St. Paul makes
it his chief design to prove ;
That no Man could be Justified
by

by the Observation of the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaical Law*, and that the way to obtain Eternal Salvation, since the Revelation of the *Gospel*, was by Faith in Jesus Christ, and leading our Lives suitable to our Profession. He proceeds to shew the Reasons why God had made choice of this Method of bringing Mankind nearer to himself, and gives an Answer to all those Objections which might probably be made against it, either by *Jews* or *Heathens*. And to make this Truth the more evident, That the *Law* was perfected by the *Gospel*, he instances in the several parts of the *Mosaical Law*, the Ritual, Judicial and Moral; And having thus laid down and confirmed this Proposition, he from thence draws that important Inference contained in the Text, *I beseech*

beseech you therefore Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your Reasonable Service.

In which Words are contained
1. An earnest Exhortation to the leading of an Holy and Religious Life, according to the Precepts of the Gospel, and devoting our selves and all our concerns to promote the Glory of God. I beseech you therefore, Brethren, that you present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

2. Here are two powerful Motives to engage us to the practice of it. 1. The Consideration of the Bounty of God towards us, and the benefits which we have received from him. I beseech you therefore Brethren by the Mercies of God. 2. The Reasonableness of that Service or Worship (for so the

κατασκευα.

the Word signifies in the Original) which is enjoined us. *Which is your Reasonable Service.* I shall be very brief in speaking to the first of these Heads, The Exhortation to the leading of a good Life; my design being chiefly to treat of the second, and particularly of that powerful Motive, The Agreement of the Christian Religion to the Maxims of Sanctified Reason, both in respect of those Truths we are obliged to believe, and those Duties we are commanded to Practice.

M. Here is an earnest Exhortation to the leading of a Holy and Religious Life, and devoting ourselves to the Service of God. *I beseech you therefore Brethren, that you present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God.* The Apostle here alludes to the Sacrifices of the Jews, for where-

as

as under the *Law*, they were commanded to offer up to God the dead Bodies of Beasts, under the *Gospel* it was required of them, that they should offer up *their own Bodies a living Sacrifice* (i. e.) that they should mortifie those corrupt Affections, and inordinate Passions which have their seat in the Body, and are, as it were, Parts and Members of it; keeping them under, and bringing them into subjection to the Law of God, and dedicating both their Bodies and Souls to the Worship and Service of God. The Body here is only mentioned; either because these *Corporeæ pestes*, these Bodily Maladies, our unsanctified Desires and Affections, are the causes of all our Spiritual Diseases; or else the part is put for the whole, and in the Body, the Soul is also included; and *this Sacrifice of our Bodies*

Bodies and Souls to God is called a *holy Sacrifice*; either first, in Opposition to the Sacrifices of the *Gentiles*, which were polluted by those many impure Rites and Ceremonies which were mingled with their Worship; or else because they were cleansed from all filthiness both of *Flesh and Spirit*, and Sanctified by the Holy Ghost; or lastly, because they were Consecrated to the Service and Worship of God, and Dedicated to a Holy Use, in which Relative Holiness doth consist. And these Sacrifices being thus Holy, 'tis no wonder that they should be acceptable unto God, much more acceptable unto him, than those Sacrifices under the Law were, or could be; first, because they approach'd nearer to the Nature of God, who is a Holy Being and of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity

ty (*i. e.*) so to behold it, as to approve of it, and incourage and abett it; and therefore takes delight in the Purity and Holiness of his Creatures. Secondly, because the Sacrifices under the *Lam*, were but *Types* of those more Spiritual Sacrifices, which were to be offered up under the *Gospel*, and every *Type* in the *Mosaical Lam* had relation to something which was to be perform'd under the *Gospel*; and as the Substance is more valuable than the Shadow, so the thing Typified, must needs be more acceptable unto God than the Type by which 'tis shadowed out and represented. Let us therefore close with this Exhortation of the Apostle, and offer up our Bodies a *living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God*; and to engage us hereunto, let us consider those Arguments and Motives by which this Exhortation

tation is inforc'd in the Text. *I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God (i. e.) by that particular Grace, Mercy, and Favour, by which, having passed by his chosen People the Jews, he opens the Gate of Salvation to the Gentiles, and by the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ thro' the whole World, Proclaims these Joyful Tidings unto them. This is a Mercy which loudly calls for Repentance and Holiness, and is an Obligation sufficient to prevail with every grateful Person, to present his Body a living Sacrifice, Holy, acceptable unto God : For God*

Heb. 1. 2. *who in times past spoke to the World by his Prophets, has in these last Ages of the World, spoke to us by his Son ; who has revealed to us the whole Mind and Will of his Father, inforc'd it with the most powerful Motives, and propos'd him-
self*

self a perfect and Heroical Example in all the Instances of our Duty; so that now there is nothing wanting but our honest and hearty Endeavours, to make us pure and holy, and by consequence happy. This is so endearing a Testimony of his Love and Affection towards us, that one would think it should be sufficient to engage us to undertake the most difficult things, and to undergo the greatest hardships in his Service. But farther, Gods Commands are so excellent in their own Nature, that they might well become our choice, if they were not our Duty; *they are our Reasonable Service.* λογική λατρεία which may be diversly renderd. If it relates to the ὁ λόγος, the Word as it signifies Christ, then 'tis the Christian Service. If by λόγος is understood the Word or Scripture, then it denotes such a Worship as

Z

is

is prescrib'd in the Holy Scripture, which is countenanced by the *Syriack* Version. If λόγος is taken as opposed to νόμος, then it will denote an Evangelical Worship. Either of these Interpretations may be closed with, but yet the coherence of the Words with the former part of the Epistle, and the Circumstances of the place, seem to restrain it to the ordinary notion, and common acceptation of the Word, λογική, Rational, or such a Worship or Service as agrees with the strict Notions of Right Reason, which is most conformable to, and becoming a Pure and Holy God to receive, and Man to offer up; such as tends most to promote the Glory of God, and to enoble Mens Nature, and to bring them nearer to their utmost Perfection in this World, and to Qualifie them for the Blessedness of

of the next. And I have taken the more pains to clear up the meaning of this Phrase, because I design these Words for the Subject of my following Discourse. 'Tis plain that these Words λογική λατρεία, *A Reasonable Service or Worship*, denote to us the service of our Souls as well as Bodies, of our Minds and Understandings, as well as our Wills and Affections; the whole Man must be offered up a *living Sacrifice*, and every power of our Body, every Faculty of our Soul must be employed in his Worship.

And this will more evidently appear, by considering what Service God requires of us in his Holy Gospel, and how Just and Reasonable 'tis he should do so.

1. The Gospel of our Saviour Christ requires the Assent of the Understanding, to those Truths it contains.

7 2

2. The

Sermon Ninth.

2. The Obedience of the Will to those Duties it enjoins.

3. The Zeal and Fervour of our Affections in the Performance of them.

1. The Holy Gospel requires the Assent of the Understanding to those Truths it contains. Now these Truths are either such as are evident by the Light of Nature, or may be collected from Natural Principles, by rational and plain Inferences; or else have been delivered down to us by Men Inspired by the Holy Spirit. And first, there are many Truths contained in the Gospel of our Saviour Christ, which are plain and evident from the Light of Nature, (*i. e.*) the Understanding assents to the Truth of some Propositions, as soon as ever they are clearly proposed to it, and the Terms are apprehended by it; others are struck out

out of these natural and seminal Principles by the dint of Reason. 'Tis plain to every sober Inquirer, that there is one first Cause of things, from whom all Created Beings derived their Original; that he is the most perfect Being, and contains in himself all those Endowments in a transcendent manner, which he has communicated to his Creatures. And from hence the wise and vertuous Men of all Ages collected, that this good Being, who is invested with Infinite Wisdom and Power, must needs Rule and Govern the World with the strictest Justice, and most Impartial Equity; and that having endowed Mankind with Rational Souls, and a liberty of Determining their Actions either to good or evil, he will certainly call them to an account, and reward or punish them in another World, according

to their Works. To these Truths, even the very Heathens (as *St. Paul* tells us) gave their Assent. They easily collected by Rational Inferences, that this stupendious Fa-
brick of the World must needs be the contrivance of some skilful Agent, and that exquisite Beauty and Uniformity which is visible in every part of it, plainly proves, that the Divine Creator of it, must needs be in himself infinitely more Beautiful and Excellent than any part of his Work. They considered also the Operations of the Soul (that Ray of Divinity which informs the whole Body, and yet dispenses its Influences after so wonderful a manner, as if it were wholly in every part of it) how it performs many different Operations at the same time, and has a power given it to look backward, by reflecting on its own Actions ; and
by

by considering what the Event of things has been, and comparing them with the present Circumstances of Affairs, to make probable Conjectures what will come to pass: And from such Reflections as these, they wisely concluded, that such admirable Effects could not proceed from Matter and Motion only; but that the Soul must be a Spiritual and thinking Being, and by consequence Immortal. And thus having laid this down as an undoubted and unquestionable Truth, That the Soul will survive after the Body is dissolved and mouldered into Dust, they from hence made this Rational Inference, That it must needs be accountable in the other World, for all its Deeds transacted in this.

All this is evident from the Light of Nature and Reason, and will gain the Assent of every sober Man

who doth but give himself leasure to think, and to improve those Notices of things, which naturally result from the Exercise of Reason. That which is most called in Question is

2. Whether those Truths which are known to us, only by Divine Revelation, are also to be scann'd by the Maxims of Reason. For there are some who have taken a great deal of pains to set Faith and Reason in opposition to each other, and to make the World believe that Men must lay aside their Reason, when they Contemplate the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, they must blindly give up their Assent to those Articles of Faith

Ad nudam
præscripti-
onem, aut
determi-
nationem
alterius
potest et
fidei,

which the Church delivers down to them, without asking why, or
sive lumine privati Judicii nemo est qui credere
potest et am si cupiat maxime. vid. Davenant de Ind ee ac norma

where-

wherefore, and take them in the same Terms they are proposed, without any previous enquiry ; *Credo quia impossibile*, is with these Men a conclusive Argument, and they are most inclinable to believe that which they do not understand. To obviate this growing Mischief, and in some measure to clear up our Notions as to this important Inquiry ; I shall endeavour to lay down my thoughts more plainly and distinctly on this Subject, in these following Propositions.

1. There is no Being in the World, whose Essence is fully and adequately comprehended by Human Reason. We see only the surface and out-side of things, and form conclusions concerning them from their external Appearances, but the Nature and Essence of things is in a great measure concealed from our Notice. Truth
lies

lies hid in the bottom of *Demo-*
critus his Well, and 'tis beyond
the power of Human Industry to
bring it to Light. We are Igno-
rant of the Cause and Reason of
the most obvious Phænomena of
Nature, and tho' learned Men have
given some pretty and likely So-
lutions of some of them, yet for
the most part they deserve rather
the name of Conjecture than Sci-
ence. And if we have so little
knowledge of the Essential pro-
perties of things, and the manner
how they subsist and perform their
Operations ; then much less can
we expect to obtain any clear and
certain Knowledge of their mu-
tual Relations and Dispositions,
from whence general Propositi-
ons are form'd. Nay we are Ig-
norant, not only of those Beings
we daily Converse with, but we
are strangers also to our own Make
and

and Frame; so that when we reflect upon this lesser World, our Bodies; we must needs stand amazed at our own Composition, and confess with the Psalmist, that we are *fearfully and wonderfully made*. But tho' it must be confessed, that we are Masters of little true and solid Knowledge; yet

2. All that Knowledge which we have obtained, was gained by the use and exercise of our Reason. Reason is a spark of Heavenly Fire, a Divine Light which God has placed in us, to dispel the thick mists of Ignorance and Error, and to enable us to distinguish Truth from Falshood. It has already been confessed, that 'tis only a weak and glimmering Light, and very much obscured by the Fall of Man; but yet 'tis still sufficient to conduct us so far, that

Τὸ ἀρεθὸν
λόγῳ πα-
θεσθαι καὶ
θεῷ, ταυτὸν
ἔστι. Hie-
rocles, Ra-
tio nihil a-
liud est
quam in
corpus hu-
manum
pars divini
Spiritus
mersa.
Seneca.

that by the Assistance of Gods Grace, and the Illumination of his Holy Spirit, we may be inform'd thereby in all things necessary to our well-being in this World, and enabled to obtain Eternal Happiness in the World to come.

Reason, if taken for the Faculty, is that Reasonable Soul which God has placed in every one of us : If for the Act, 'tis the Exercise of the Faculties of the Soul, the Apprehending such Objects as are presented to the Mind, and from thence forming a Judgment of them. Now since all Science is obtained by this means, we may from hence safely conclude; That all the Knowledge we are masters of, whether Human or Divine, is obtained by the use and exercise of our Reason. 'Tis true, the Promise to the Apostles, of the Spirit which should lead them into all Truth, was
made

made good unto them, by informing their Understandings privately, and secretly, with the Knowledge of such high and heavenly Mysteries, as had never before entered into the conceit of Man. But this Promise when applied to us, will be performed after a different manner, by inclining us to consult those Holy Scriptures which they have written, wherein those Divine Revelations are contained, and to make use of those Means diligently and carefully, which God has appointed for our Information. And therefore

3. Reason is the Judge of all such Truths, as are adequate to Reason. For as Sense is the proper Judge of such Objects as are presented to the sensitive Faculty; as the Eye is the proper Judge of Colours, the Ear of Sounds; so Reason is the proper Judge of all

all such Truths as lie level to its Faculties, and are within the sphere of its activity. Our Reason was bestowed upon us for this End, that we might be enabled to contemplate the Wonders of Gods Creation and Providence, and hereby be incited to sing Anthems of Praise to the great Author of them. God expects that we should make use of this noble Faculty wherewith he has endowed us, to spell out those Truths which he has writ on the great Volume of the World, and from the Contemplation of Inferiour Beings, to raise up our Thoughts to the Supream Being, and first Cause of them all : The use which *Adam* made of his Reason in a state of Innocency, even by the command of God himself, was to enquire into the Nature of Animals, to consider the different make and disposition of living Creatures,

Creatures, and to transmit the Sum of his Disquisitions, by fixing Names of Distinction on them. The Holy Scripture was design'd to *make Men Wise unto Salvation*, ^{2 Tim. 3.} not to instruct them in Natural Philosophy; and therefore we find so many Descriptions therein, accommodated to the Apprehensions of the Vulgar. For as to Secular Affairs and the Operations of Natural Agents, it generally takes up and complies with the common Notions of things, and reveals to us such Truths, as could never have been found out, and comprehended by Reason.

4. Reason is the proper Judge, what Truths are Revealed and what not. God has appealed to the Reason of Mankind, even as to the Reasonableness of their Belief of those Truths, which Reason cannot comprehend; and which are
known

known to them only by Divine Revelation. For 'tis not sufficient to say, that such and such Truths are Revealed to us in the Holy Writ, unless we have very good Reason to believe that they are Revealed. Revelation is pretended by differing Parties, and made the Argument for contrary, and even contradictory Opinions; and therefore our own Reason must be made use of to find out the true Revelation, and to distinguish it from that which is only pretended so to be; and therefore I shall proceed one step farther, and shew

5. That no Opinion, how clear soever it may seem to be Revealed, which implies a plain contradiction to the Natural Notions of a Mans Mind, can possibly be true. As for Example, tho' it is highly consistent with Reason, that the
Divine

Divine Essence should be Incomprehensible, and its Attributes infinitely Mysterious above all that we can think or imagine; and therefore, we are obliged to believe whatsoever God has been pleased to Reveal to us of himself, tho' it surpasses our weak Understandings to apprehend the manner how it can be so: yet, if any one should tell me, that 'tis Revealed in the Holy Scripture, That God is a Cruel, Arbitrary and Unjust Being; I think I may safely answer, without derogating any thing from the Authority of Holy Writ, that he misunderstands the meaning of those places, which he quotes, to prove this absurd Opinion by. For since that Notion of a God, which I bear in my Mind is this, That God is a Being, who comprehends all possible Perfection; 'tis a plain Contradiction, to affirm, That In-

justice and Cruelty, can be suitable Qualities for such a Holy and Pure Being. And therefore I have Reason to believe, that these Texts of Scripture are to be understood in some other Sense, a Sense agreeable to those Natural Notions, which God has imprinted on the Minds of Men. From all that has been said, it will plainly appear, That all those Truths, which we are necessarily and indispensably obliged to yield our Assent to, are agreeable to the Principles of right Reason; and therefore in this Respect also, the Christian Religion must needs be our *Reasonable Service*; which being made out, it will be no difficult matter to prove

2. That those Duties which the Christian Religion obliges us to perform, are also our *Reasonable Service*. But this I design for the Subject

Subject of the following Discourse, and therefore I shall conclude this with an Inference or two from the foregoing Propositions.

I. From what has been already said, That Religion will appear to be the best, which is most agreeable to our Reason. We live in an Age, when the Christian Religion is divided into innumerable Sects and Parties, and many of these confine Salvation to those of their own Way and Belief; when the Truths necessary to be believed on pain of Damnation, are made so many, that 'tis no easie matter to be informed in them. What course then shall we Steer? which way shall we take? If we appeal to the Church, we are told that there is no knowing the true Church, but by comparing the Doctrine which it teaches, with the Holy

Scriptures. If to the Holy Scriptures, their Authority is indeed acknowledged by all, but made use of equally to uphold and support their disagreeing Assertions; every one puts an Interpretation on them suitable to his own humour and fancy, and even the Devil himself could quote Scripture, when he Tempted our blessed Saviour. By what means then shall we come to the true Interpretation of the Holy Scripture, but by considering the occasion and coherence of the Words, Explaining the more difficult places, by those which are more plain, comparing Text with Text, and weighing them in the ballance of unprejudiced Reason? For tho' in the Holy Scriptures, we have some Truths proposed to our Assent, which are above our Understanding, yet none which are contrary to the Principles of Right Reason,

Reason, and therefore when there doth arise any Dispute which cannot be determined by the express Words of the Holy Scripture, the best way to decide it, is to weigh it in the ballance of unprejudiced Reason. 'Tis true, that thro' the whole Bible there are great things spoke of Faith, but then it must be such a Faith as is founded and bottomed on Rational Principles: For Faith is the giving our Assent to some Truth, upon the Authority of some Person who has declared it to us ; and therefore to the forming of a sound and rational Faith, we ought to be assured, 1. That the Person is duly informed of the thing he relates, 2. That he either will not, or cannot impose upon us, 3. That he has related the thing to us, which we believe, 4. That we apprehend it after the same manner the Relator doth, who has

discovered it unto us; and our certainty in every one of these Enquiries, must depend upon Principles of Reason. Since therefore Faith it self has such an absolute dependance and near connexion with Reason, it will certainly follow, That those Truths ought to be most readily embraced, which are clearest and plainest to our Reason; and that, That Religion is the best, not which raises our Admiration with the most high-flown Notions and curious Speculations, or clogs our Belief with the most unaccountable Mysteries, and in the most obvious and intelligible Doctrines, perplexes the Mind with innumerable Scruples: But that which Informs the Judgment with the most weighty Truths, such as have a direct Influence upon Practice, and discovers the Mind and Will of God most clearly and plainly

plainly to us, and lays down the most encouraging Motives to engage us to the performance of it. And therefore, as on the one hand those Persons are very much mistaken, who think our Reason sufficient to bring us to the Knowledge of all Truth, whether Human or Divine: So do they err as much on the contrary hand, who wholly exclude Reason from matters of Faith; and are so fond of Mysteries, that they will either find, or make Mysteries, in the plainest Articles of our Faith.

2. We may hence infer what Points these are in which we ought most to distrust our Reason. And these are such as Reason it self tells us are beyond its Reach; as the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour. For since the greatest part of our Knowledge comes in by our

A a 4 Senses,

Senses, Reason it self will inform us, that our Ideas of a Spiritual Being, are confus'd and imperfect; and that the Essence of the Almighty, must needs infinitely transcend our limited Conceptions of him, and that our very Frames must be altered, and our Bodies spiritualized, before we shall be capable of receiving those Rays of Illumination and Knowledge, which will shine in upon the Soul, in a state of Glory and Happiness. And therefore, 'tis highly worthy our observation, that those Truths which are most Mysterious, are least necessary to be understood, whereas those which are absolutely necessary to Salvation, lie level to every ones Understanding, or else are plainly Revealed in the Holy Writ; and may, and ought to be readily entertained and assented to, by every good Christian.

an. And therefore from hence I shall infer farther

3. That all damnable Heresies, proceed rather from the pravity of Mens Wills, than the error of their Judgments. Natural Reason will go a great way to inform Men in the Knowledge of all that they ought to do, or to Believe; and where that fails, God has taken care to guide and conduct them by the Light of Revelation; so that whensoever they go astray from the Way of Gods Commandments; their Sin must be imputed to the pravity of their Wills, rather than the Error of their Judgments. And from hence 'tis, that there are such absurd and unreasonable Opinions entertained in Religious matters; Men make themselves Slaves to their own Lusts and Passions, and Worldly Interests; and then their business is to
Inquire

Les Incréd-
dules ne
sauroient
regarder
comme ve-
ritable,
ce qui est
opposé
aux maxi-
mes par les-
quelles ils
condui-
sent de-
puis long-
temps, &
aux habi-
tudes
qu'ils ont
formées
depuis
plusieurs
années Le
Clerc de l'
incrédulité
P. 4. & 12.
Etc.
Qui in vi-
tiis sibi
placent,
nobis non
erudent,
etiam si so-
lem in ma-
nibus geste-
mus. Lac-
tantius
Charron lib.
2. de la
Sigeſſe.

Inquire out, not what is the plain Truth, but what colour and appearance of Reason will afford the best Umbrage, and plead the most plausible Excuse for their enormous and unreasonable Practices; and therefore the Apostle with very good Reason, ranks Heresies amongst the Works of the Flesh, because 'tis generally from our inordinate Appetites and sinful Passions, that they derive their Original. There are few that hold their Opinions by Arguments, and drie Reasonings, but by relish in the Affections, which influence the Understanding: So that seldom any thing cures our Intellectual Diseases thoroughly, but what changes these

4. Hence we may infer what great Reason *Christians* have, (and especially we of the Church of *England*, to bless God for giving us

us so excellent a Religion, which is built on the solid foundation of sound Reason. To the *Jews* (tho' Gods peculiar People) God gave a Religion which was not good, (*i. e.*) the Judicial and Ceremonial parts of the *Jewish* Religion, had no internal goodness or agreement with the Nature of Man; but the *Christian* Religion is a good and gracious Yoke, a Law, which if duly observed, dignifies and perfects our Natures, and renders us more and more like the Being we Worship. But since the Christian Religion has been depraved and debased by the corrupt Glosses, and perverse Interpretations of Scripture, the Traditions and Inventions of Superstitious Men; therefore we of the Church of *England* have the more Reason to bless God, for giving and continuing to us, a Religion purified and refined by a blessed

bleſſed Reformation. We are not led on blindly, to believe as the Church believes, or to pin our Faith (as we commonly ſay) on anothers Sleeve; but have liberty, and are encouraged to ſearch *John 5.29. the Scriptures*, to read, mark, weigh, and conſider the Truths contained therein, and inwardly to digeſt them; and from thence to collect what 'tis which God requires of us. We have a Religion which will bear the Teſt of the ſevereſt Tryal; and the more 'tis examined, the better we ſhall like and approve of it. The moſt frequent and Juſt complaint of us Miniſters, is, that Men will not take the pains to look into the Reaſons and Principles of their Religion, that they will not conſider upon what a ſure Foundation the Articles of their Faith are built; we earneſtly deſire and entreat

treat our Hearers, that they would seriously consider, and learn these things, and suffer themselves to be instructed in the Articles of their Faith ; that they would labour to understand the meaning of them, what dependance they have one upon another, by what Arguments they are back'd both from Reason and Scripture, what Objections are made against them; that hereby they may be enabled to render a Reason of the Faith and Hope that 1 Pet. 3. is in them, and convince the gainsayer.^{15.} And the chief Reason why some of our Communion have been drawn away from us, plainly appears to be, because they were never well grounded in the Principles of their Religion. They built their Faith on the sandy Foundation of Fancy or Custom, and then, no wonder that they are turn'd about with every Wind of Doctrine,

Doctrine, and ready to veer to any Point of the Compass, to which they are directed, either by Interest or Humor. They never searched into the depth and bottom of the Religion Established in the Church of *England*, much less, did they ever enquire into the *Rationale* of its Devotions, who were the first Composers of them, from whom they received these Excellent Forms of Prayer, for what Reason they were reduc'd into this Order, and after what manner they ought to be pronounc'd and repeated by us, and for the most part they are as little skill'd, and can give as unsatisfactory Account of that Way they are gone into, as that they left. And in truth, if we consider it well, we shall find that the chief Reason, why we of the Reformed Religion are not of one Mind, at least so far,

as

as to hold one Communion, is;
That our Religion is generally
more in the Tongue, than in the
Head and the Heart; I mean we
love rather to talk in a Religious
Phrase and a Dialect, than either
to Understand or Practice it. And
from hence 'tis there are too many
amongst us, who are not able to
distinguish the Fundamental, from
the less necessary Truths; those
which are the weightier Matters,
which every one ought to hold
fast, from those which are of less
concernment, in which mu-
tual forbearance and Indulgence
ought to be given.

Lastly, If the Religion we pro-
fess, is so Reasonable, and if we
are Members of so Pure and Ho-
ly a Church, and live under so ex-
cellent a Constitution, then how
great will our Condemnation be,
if

Voyes un
liure inti-
tule la
maniere
de rejoin-
dre lous
les Chisti-
ens sous
une seule
confession
de Foy.
imprimee
a Saumur.

if our Lives are not answerable to our Profession; for every Sin that we commit, is a reproach to our Reason, and a Scandal cast upon the best Church in the World: And let our Principles be never so rational, and conformable to their Divine and unerring Rule, the Holy Scriptures; yet, if we do not govern our Words and Actions by them, they will only expose us to the greater Condemnation. Let us therefore, not only confute and out-reason the Enemies of our Church, but out-live them too; and by transcribing the Holy Lives of the Primitive Christians, as well as professing the purity of their Faith, recommend our Holy Religion to those who are without, and render our Church Impregnable, against all the assaults of its Enemies. Which
God

Sermon Ninth.

369

God of his Mercy grant for the
fake of its Supream Head, and
the Captain of our Salvation, the
Lord Christ Jesus.

The End of the Ninth Sermon.

28 JY 58

B b

SER.

255

Stewart N. Smith

God of his mercy
take of his suffering
the Father of our
I and Christ Jesus

...

...

The End of the World
1871

...

...

S E R M O N X.

*Rom. 12. 1. The latter
part of that Verse.*

*Which is but your Reason-
able Service.*

IN a former Discourse on these Words, I proposed to do these two things.

1. To shew what Service God requires of us in his Holy Gospel.

2. How Just and Reasonable 'tis he should do so.

1. The Gospel of our Saviour Christ, requires the Assent of the Understanding, to those Truths it contains.

B b 2

2. The

2. The Obedience of the Will to those Duties it enjoins.

3. The Zeal and Fervour of our Affections in the performance of them.

I have already Treated of the first of these, and shewed of what use *Reason* is in matters of Faith; and that the Belief of the Fundamental Articles of our Religion, is *our Reasonable Service*. I proceed to shew

2. That those Duties which the Christian Religion obliges us to perform, are *our Reasonable Service*. As will appear if we consider our Duty, as we stand in Relation first to God. 2. To the Government we live under. 3. To our Neighbour. 4. To ourselves. And

1. I shall consider those Duties which more immediately relate to God, and are enjoined us in the first

first Table; such as Love, Worship, Reverence, and Dependance on him. And how *Reasonable* 'tis that we should perform these Duties, will appear from these following Considerations. 1. From the Consideration of the Nature of God. 2. Of our own Beings. 3. Of those blessed Effects which naturally flow from the performance of these Duties.

1. The *Reasonableness* of those Duties which immediately relate to God, such as the Loving, Fearing and Worshipping of him, will appear from the Consideration of Gods Nature. If we will but apply our Thoughts to that Notion we have of a God, either as we apprehend him to be the first Cause of all things, or as we conceive him Invested with all his admirable Perfections and Attributes, which are discovered to us, both

by natural Reason, and Divine Revelation ; it must needs appear highly agreeable to the Dictates of *Reason*, that we should offer up to him the Service both of our Souls and Bodies ; by admiring and loving his amiable Perfections, adoring and reverencing his Majesty, relying and depending on him, and expressing the Sentiments of our Hearts, by the Language of our Tongues. For if God is the first Cause of all things, who by the word of his Power, Created this wonderful Frame of the World out of Nothing, and disposed this comely Order of things, and more particularly, has furnished us with all the good things we enjoy, opening his hand, and dispensing his Benefits unto us ; then it must needs be highly *Reasonable* that we should Love, Worship, and Adore this our supream and magnifi-

magnificent Benefactor. His Power and Dominion over us, call loudly for our Worship and Acknowledgment; his Goodness and Bounty, for our Love, Esteem, and Gratitude; nay, every Perfection which we discover in the Divine Nature, if duly considered, and contemplated, would raise up some suitable Affection in our Hearts, and direct us in the Worship of our Maker. Were but our Minds duly informed with the Knowledge of God, had we but right Notions of his Excellencies and Perfections, and did we but seriously attend to them; we could not go far astray in the performance of our Worship towards him. For (as a late Eminent Father of our Church has observed)
“ That Religious Worship must
“ needs be best, and most acceptable
“ to God, which is most conformable

“ to those Natural Notions, which
“ we bear of him in our Minds.
From the Consideration therefore
of those glorious Attributes & Per-
fections of God, his Power and
Goodness, and Veracity; we may
easily collect how reasonable 'tis,
that we should Worship, Love,
Fear, and Trust in him, in which
all our Duty to God is contained.
As also, 2. From the Considerati-
on of the condition of our own
Beings. We are poor, frail, impo-
tent Creatures, and depend upon
this first Cause, not only for our
Being at first, but also for our
Subsistence and continuance in it;
every Moment that we Breathe, is
the gift of his Bounty, and we are
Preserved by the same Almighty
Power, by which we were at first
Formed and Created; and if so,
then how *Reasonable* is it, that we
should own our Dependance upon
God,

God, by a daily Acknowledgment of his Mercies, that we should retain a grateful Sense of his Benefits, dread the loss of his Favour, and depend upon him for a supply of all our future necessities, and for deliverance from all those Dangers and Calamities, to which we are continually exposed, which would deprive us of the benefit of all those Blessings; especially considering, 3. That even by the performance of those Duties, we contribute to our own Welfare, and encrease our own Happiness. For to Worship God, is our Priviledge, as well as our Duty, and would be the Practice of every good Man, who has a true taste and relish of *Reasonable Pleasure*, tho' it were not enjoin'd him. There is a wonderful Delight in serving God, and performing the Exercises of Devotion, of which

which, if we are not sensible, we have Reason to distrust the sincerity of our Hearts, and to conclude that we are only *in Name*, but *not really and indeed*, Christians. For 'tis the greatest Pleasure and Happiness on this side Heaven, for a Man to have his Mind filled with glorious Images and Conceptions of the Divine Majesty, his Affections placed on this solid and durable Good, and to be able to depend on 'him in all Dangers and Calamities, to repose himself *under the Shadow of his Wings*, to resign up his Will to Gods, under the most deplorable Circumstances, and to have such a grateful Sense of all his Mercies and Loving-kindness to him, as will kindle in his Heart the flames of fervent Love and Charity. How grateful an Employment must it needs be to a poor Soul, sensible of its many
ny

ny Wants and Infirmities, to lay open the desires of his Heart to an Infinitely good and powerful Being, who is both able and willing to do him good, and to express the resentments of a grateful Mind in the Language of Praise and Thanksgiving? For tho' these Duties are irksome and tedious to an un sanctified Mind, as also to those who are only entring on a Religious Life, and beginning to be Good and Vertuous: Yet I dare boldly affirm, that as the greatest part of our Happiness in Heaven, will be plac'd in the Exercises of Piety and Devotion; so, even here on Earth, every good and holy Man, takes greater Pleasure and Delight in them, than in the most luscious Gratifications of Sense. For the Service and Glory of God, was the main and principal End of our Creation; and every good Man is
best

best pleased, and most at ease, when he Acts in his proper Sphere, and most regularly pursues the End he was designed for : And if so, then certainly the Worship of God is *but our Reasonable Service*, an Employment we should be very fond of, and perform with Pleasure and Delight. If we go on to consider the Duties of the Christian Religion.

2. With Relation to the Government we live under ; what can be more *Reasonable*, than that those who have the Government of the People committed to their Charge, whether in a Supream, or in a Subordinate Degree, should consider, that they are in Gods stead, and his Vicegerents ; and therefore ought to Exercise that Power Intrusted with them, for the good of all those who are in Subjection to them,

1 Pet. 2.
14.

for the Punishment of evil

evil doers, and the Praise of them that do well. That hereby Peace and good Order may be kept up amongst all Sorts and Degrees of Men. And therefore Governours in the Holy Scripture are called Gods, because God has delegated his Power and Authority in the Government of the World to them, and made them his Vicegerents, to bestow and maintain those invaluable Blessings of Peace and good Order, and all those other Mercies which depend on them, and are consequential to them, on those who are under their Care and Charge. For Peace is the same to the Body Politick, as Health is to the Natural, 'tis the Spring and Source from whence all Temporal Happiness flows, and without which, all other Mercies would be useless to us; and therefore 'tis highly Reasonable that
Gover-

Governours should be Publick-spirited Men, lovers of their Country, and who make it their business, not so much to advance their own Gain and Profit, and to Aggrandize themselves and Families, as to consult the Advantage and Interest of the Community, and to promote the Publick-good. And that they may be enabled to perform their Duty; 'tis equally as necessary, that Inferiours should be Obedient to those whom God has set over them, *not only for Wrath (i. e.)* for fear of the Penalties of the Law, but *for Conscience sake*; that they should shew them due Honour and Respect, both by their Words and Actions, Contribute to their Maintenance, and hereby enable them to Protect them from their Enemies abroad, and from Difaffected, Treacherous and Seditious *Bontefens* at Home; that

Rom. 13.
5.

that they should yield them the Homage of their Persons and Attendance, and pray to God both in Publick and Private, for their Health and Welfare, and for their Success in all their Laudable and Praise-worthy Enterprizes; considering that we are all like Mariners Sailing in the same Vessel, the good of every Private Person is wrapt up and involved in the good of the Publick; and if one Member of the Body-politick suffer, the rest of the Members must needs suffer with it. These Duties are so highly *Reasonable*, that there needs only a sober Animadversion, to convince us of our Obligation to obey them. Nor is it less necessary

3. That those Duties which one Neighbour owes to another, should be punctually observed, that Love, Peace, and Unanimity should

should be kept up ; that we should *love our Neighbour as our selves*, and do to all Men, as we our selves desire to be dealt withal by them, if we were in their Circumstances, and they in ours ; that every Mans Property should be secured, that he should suffer no Wrong either in his Person, Goods, or Reputation ; that we should be True, and Just, and Punctual in all all our Dealings , and make our Tongues the faithful Interpreters of our Minds ; that we should be contented with that Lot and Portion, and Station in the World, which God has assigned us, so as not to covet or desire what is another Mans ; but to be as willing that every Man should enjoy what is his, as we are to keep what is our own : These Duties are so agreeable to the natural Dictates of our own Minds, that every one

~~who~~
that

that doth but hear them proposed, must confess, that they are highly Just and Reasonable, and have been practised by the more sober Heathens, even to the shame and scandal of us Christians. And therefore we have no need to commend them, or back them with Arguments, unless it is in that one particular Instance, of *loving our Enemies*, which it must be confessed, has sometimes been thought unreasonable, and for the most part practised rather out of Obedience, than Inclination. 'Tis true, the Heathens thought themselves under no Obligation of returning good for evil; and the Rule before the coming of our Blessed Saviour, was *an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth*; they strain'd that excellent Rule, of *doing to others, as we would have them deal with us*, to signifie, that

Uriel Ado
sta Jugeoit
que ce
commande
ment etant
impossible
a practi-
quer, & il
etoit inuti-
le de le
donner
aux hom-
mes, & il
ne pouvoit
croire que
Dieu l'eut
reve le. L'
Histoie re-
de sa vie
imprimee
a Tergou
en, 1687.

we may justly return those Injuries upon other Men, which they either first Acted, or designed to Inflict upon us ; and therefore Cicero, that excellent Moralist, lays it down for a Rule, That we should Injure no Man, *nisi laceffi-ti Injuria*, unless 'tis one who has injured and provoked us, by the first Affront. But this is not the Doctrine of the Meek and Humble Jesus : He taught us both by Precept and his own Example ; that we should *Love our Enemies*, *do good to those that hate us, and pray for them that despightfully use us, and persecute us.* And yet upon a deliberate Examination, even this will appear to be our *Reasonable Service*, very much for our Interest in this World to be practised, as well as our unquestionable Duty. For first, to pass by Injuries, to love our Enemies, to re-
turn

Mat. 5. 44.

turn their evil deeds and opprobrious Language, with the tokens of our real love and kindness, is the best way to maintain all manner of Peace; *viz.* the Peace of our Minds, our Peace with God, and our Peace with Men; nay, 'tis the most probable way to defeat the Malice of our Enemies, and to bring good out of the evil they design against us, by melting them down into Love and Friendship; and by *heaping these Coals of Kindness upon their Heads*, and by a Heavenly kind of Chymistry, to transmute them into the most faithful Friends. Besides, 'tis a much more difficult Task to revenge an Injury, than to pass it by; and he punishes himself most, and draws the most pernicious Consequences upon his own head, who executes his Revenge on other Men. And lastly, 'tis a Duty

enjoined by that God, who has forgiven us ten thousand times more than we can forgive our Neighbour, and has sent his only begotten Son out of his Bosom, to lay down his Life for us, when we were Enemies to him. Upon all these accounts (which I have only time to name) it must needs appear highly Just and Reasonable, very much for our Interest, as well as agreeable to our Duty; to pass by Injuries, and to put up Affronts, to love our Enemies, and to return their evil Language and Deeds, with the Tokens of our real Love and Esteem. So that it only remains, that I consider the *Reasonableness* of our Duty in the government of our selves. And methinks, I should not need many Arguments to prove, that to be Temperate and Sober, to govern our Passions, and to restrain
our

our Appetites within their due bounds, is our *Reasonable Service*; since the Rule and Measure by which we ought to govern all our Appetites and Passions, is the Rule of *Right Reason* ; and 'tis then only that we offend God when we indulge our selves in any of the Enjoyments of Life, in an Extravagant manner, and give the reins to our Passions, suffer them to exceed the bounds of Moderation, and Sin against our *Reason*. For God has not denied us the use of any of the good things of this World, but has furnished it like a plentiful Store-house, for our sustenance and delight, and has only prohibited the abuse of them; he has given us Appetites, and created suitable Objects for them, and permitted us to enjoy them; and in short, has withheld from us nothing which is grateful and de-

lightful, but only such things as produce Gall and Bitterness in the End, and tho' they may be acceptable to the present Sense, yet are condemned by *Reason*, as Extravagant and Brutish : Which sort of bitter-sweets a Wise Man would willingly forgo, tho' he had no Obligation from the Precepts of his Religion. Humility, Meekness, Contentedness, Diligence, Chastity, Temperance, are the Dictates of *Right Reason* ; which being duly practised, promote our Happiness in this World as well as in the next, and carry with them their own Reward. The Time would fail me should I go through each of these, and shew the *Reasonableness* of practising of them, and the difficulties which attend, and ill consequences which follow, either our neglect of them, or our pursuit of the contrary

contrary Vices ; which tho' they do prevail too much in the World, yet 'tis only because Men are governed by their Vitious Inclinations, and their ungovernable Passions have got the upper hand of their Reason. For where Reason sits in its Throne, Vertue must needs prevail ; and therefore with Solomon, the Fool and the Vitious Man, are Terms of the same Signification. This is as clear as the Noon-day, and so plain as to leave no place for doubt ; unless it is in that one Instance of Self-denyal, and Mortification, which is so strictly enjoined us by the Precepts of the Christian Religion. It may seem a hard saying, and not to be born by some, that a Man should be obliged to forgo the enjoyments of this Life, and to put such a restraint upon his Desires, as debars him from taking all that Pleasure

which lawfully he may : But yet, this difficulty will soon disappear, if we consider, that in some Cases 'tis only matter of Counsel and Advice ; and when a Man is given up to any manner of Vice or Extravagance, Prudence will direct him to bend his Inclinations rather to the contrary Extream, and to deny himself many of those Lawful Liberties, which otherwise he might take : For 'tis a dangerous thing for a Man to indulge his Appetites and Passions to their utmost extent ; the limits between Vertue and Vice are so narrow , that he must be very vigilant, who doth not pass unperceivably from one to the other. A Man may be angry and Sin not, but he who gives the reins to his Passions, and allows himself in being as angry as he lawfully may, will soon fall into extravagant and sinful Wrath; for the way

way of Vice lies down Hill, and it will be hardly possible for that Man who is in the full Career of Pleasure, to put a stop to his pursuits when he has a mind to it ; 'tis therefore highly *Reasonable* in such a Case as this, To put some restraints upon our selves, and not only to pray to God not to *lead us into Temptation*, but to take care that we do not expose our selves to it. The Mortification of our sinful Inclinations and vitious Habits, is indeed absolutely necessary, and at all times our indispensable Duty ; but then there needs no more to prove it *Reasonable* so to do, than to consider our Obligation to the contrary Vertues. For if *Reason* obliges us to be humble, it will equally engage us to avoid Pride ; if 'tis our Interest to be Sober, Intemperance must needs be to our damage ; if Justice ob-

liges

liges us to be Chast, Violence and Injustice must needs accompany Lasciviousness, and so of the rest; from whence it will sufficiently appear, that 'tis highly Reasonable, that God should exact the Obedience of our Wills to all those Duties which are enjoined us in the Holy Gospel. I proceed to shew

Lastly, That God requires not only the Homage of our Understanding, and the Obedience of our Wills, but also the zeal and fervour of the Affections; and that in this Respect also, Religion is *our Reasonable Service*. For tho' the Affections are placed in the lower Region of the Soul, yet they are an Essential part of our Holiness, and absolutely necessary

Deut. 6. 5. to carry us to Heaven; we must
 Mark 12. 30 *love the Lord our God with all our Heart, with all our Mind, and with all our Strength; all the Faculties of*

of our Souls, all the Powers of our Bodies, must be employed in the Service of our Maker; we must live like Men who love God, and Heaven, and Goodness, and set our Affections on things above, Col. 3. 2. and not on things below, we must have our Conversation in Heaven, Phil. 3. 20. (i. e.) place our chiefest Delight in those things which will bring us thither, and be our continual Employment in a future State. For let us not decieve our selves, there is more required to make a Christian, than an external compliance with the Precepts of the Gospel, and a joining in Communion with the Church, and the Duties of Religion; there must be a Vital Principle within us, there must be what the Psalmist calls a Psal. 1. 2. delight in the Law of God, a love to, and pleasure in, the performance of his Commands; our
Hearts

Hearts must be set upon the Joys of another World, we must give them the Preference before all carnal Delights, and they must have the prevailing Interest of our Souls. And from hence it is that we are so often called upon, *to give God our Hearts (i. e.)* our Affections, and *to delight our selves in God (i. e.)* to make his Service our chiefest pleasure and delight. And that this is our *Reasonable Service*, will appear from hence, because the Affections of the Soul, are nothing else but the Soul it self, considered as differently moving and influencing the Body, and he who pretends to serve God, and yet sets his Affections on any thing else ; either the Goods, Pleasures, or Honours of the World, offers up a Sacrifice without an Heart, and will find by dear bought Experience, that God, who under
the

the Law would not accept the
 Lame and Blind in Sacrifice, will
 not be pleased with the bare shew
 and out-side of Religion. *Offer* Mal. 1. 8.
it now to thy Governour, says the
 Prophet, and see whether he will
 accept such a Gift at thy Hand.
 If therefore God is our King, it
 is *reasonable*, that we should pay
 him the Homage of an hearty Af-
 fection to his Government; if God
 is our Father, we ought to obey
 him with a cordial Love and filial
 Fear; 'tis certainly highly Just and
Reasonable, that we who have re-
 ceived all we enjoy from God,
 should offer up to him the best
 that we have; the most grateful
 Resentments of Souls, filled and
 enflamed with Love and Grati-
 tude. This is the Heavenly tem-
 per of every truly devout Soul, the
 Spirit that breaths in all the *Psalms*
 of *David*. *Whom have I in Hea-* Psal. 73. 25.

ven

*ven but thee, and there is none upon
 Earth that I desire besides thee.*
 'Tis impossible to express the Ex-
 tacies and Transports of a Soul in-
 flamed with the Love of God;
 and that we are no more sensible
 of it, proceeds from the Imper-
 fection of our State in this Life,
 in which our purest Love is deba-
 sed with the course allay of a Sen-
 sual and Earthly Affection. Thus
 I have endeavoured to shew how
Reasonable 'tis, That God should
 require of us the Assent of our
 Understandings to those Truths
 contained in his Holy Word, the
 Obedience of our Wills to those
 Duties enjoined us, and the zeal
 and fervour of our Affections;
 which might easily be confirmed
 by the concurrent Observations of
 Antient and Modern Authors.
 For as a late Pious and Learned
 Divine observes. " That except-
 " ing

performance of them

“ing the two Sacraments, and
“believing in *Jesus Christ*, and the
“Observation of the Lords Day,
“which are the Instituted Means
“of our Religion, there is nothing
“made matter of Duty to us, but
“what all the Wise World had
“long before pronounced most
“highly fit and *Reasonable*.

And if so, then it only remains
that I make an Inference or two
from what has been said, and so
Conclude.

1. If Religion is our *Reasonable Service*, then have we here the
most noble and excellent Motive
to be Religious; for what can more
effectually recommend a Holy and
Religious Life to us, than this
Consideration, that 'tis such a State
of Life as is exactly agreeable
with the most noble Faculty of
our Soul, our Reason; that 'tis sui-
table to the Dignity of our Being,
and

and that Place and Station which we hold in the World, and such as becomes a Reasonable Creature to practice; that every Precept of our Religion, tends to perfect our Natures, and to make us more like that most excellent Being, from whom all manner of Goodness and Perfection is derived.

2. Hence we may Infer, that the more wicked Men grow, the more brutish and Irrational they are. For as the Practice of Vertue and Holiness, Dignifies Mens Nature, and raises it up to a nearer Conformity to Angelical Beings, and to God himself: So by indulging our selves in Wickedness and Vice, we debase our Minds, and sink them down into a Level with the Irrational Herd. For every Sin that we commit, is a deflection from the Rules of Right Reason, and committing our selves
to

to the guidance of our Passions; 'tis doing a base, unworthy, and unmanly Act; which a Wise Man would be ashamed of, and we shall be sorry for, whenever we come to take it into our serious Consideration. And the oftner we do thus, the more ready and inclinable we are to do so again; and thus by contracting Habits of Vice, we clap a Bias upon our Natures, and render our Understandings less capable of informing us when we do amiss; and from hence proceeds blindness of Understanding, when Men are so deeply immers'd in sensuality, that they come to commit Sin with greediness, and are so far from discerning the deformity and unreasonableness of Vice, that they look upon it as a commendable and praise-worthy Quality to be Wicked, and *Glo-ry in their Shame.* This is cer-

tainly a most miserable and deplorable Condition, and therefore, that we may avoid and beware of it, Let every one thus Reason with himself, as the Prophet did with the People of *Israel* and *Judah*.

Mich. 6.
8.

What doth the Lord require of me, but to do Justice, to love Mercy and to walk humbly with my God? What doth God expect from every one of us, but that we should follow the dictates of our Reason, and live up suitably to that Rank of Beings which we hold in the World, that we should make use of that Reasonable Faculty which is given us to distinguish between good and evil, and set this Candle of the Lord before us to direct our Ways? and then we shall be exalted to the higher Degrees of Glory and Immortality. But if we live by Sense and not by Reason, and submit our selves to that Law in our Members,

Members, which warreth against the Rom. 7.
Law of our Minds, and pursue af-^{23.}
 ter Earthly things, and place our
 Happiness in gratifying the Sensual
 and Brutish part of us, our Bodi-
 ly Appetites and Fleshly Lusts ;
 then have we nothing else to ex-
 pect hereafter, but *that dreadful*
looking for the Just Vengeance
and Indignation of God, for the
 abuse of those excellent Talents
 he has committed to our Trust ;
 and it would have been much bet-
 ter for us, that we had been crea-
 ted Beasts, than that we should
 make our selves such.

3. Hence we may learn to re-
 flect upon Gods wonderful Good-
 ness, in suiting our Duty to the
 Nature of our Beings, and having
 made us *Reasonable* Creatures, to
 expect from us only *Reasonable*
 Service. 'Tis the Goodness of

Gods Nature which obliges him to do, not always what of right he might do, but what is most Fit and *Reasonable* to be done; His Goodness sets Bounds to his Will, and enclines him to give such Laws to his Creatures, as are most proper to promote the Interest of those Beings who are to be governed by them. Herbs and Vegetables are guided in their Operations, by the certain and steady hand of Nature; Beasts and Sensitive Beings are governed by Instinct and Natural Propension; but Man being a Creature endowed with *Reason*, has Laws suitable to his Faculties, and his Duty *writ upon the fleshy Tables of his Heart*. 'Tis true, his Notions of Good and Evil were very much obscured and defaced, and his Judgments about them rendered doubtful and precarious

carious, by the Sin of his first Parents; but herein is manifest the Wonderful Goodness of God, in that he has found out a Remedy for this Desperate Disease, which we have contracted; and afforded to every one the blessed Influences of his Grace and Holy Spirit, who will but render himself capable to receive and entertain them; which will be sufficient to lead us into all Knowledge necessary to Salvation, and enable us to perform whatsoever he expects from us.

What then shall we render unto the Lord for these his Mercies, and his Loving-kindness to us the Children of Men? Let us offer up to him the living Sacrifice of a pure Heart, and undefiled Conscience, which will be more acceptable to him, than *the Cattel on*

Sermon Tenth.

a thousand Hills, Let us observe his Precepts, which are thus Righteous, Just, and Good, and walk in the Way of his Commandments all the Days of our Lives.

Amen. Amen.

28 JY 58

The End of the Tenth Sermon.

SER-

S E R M O N XI.

A Thanksgiving Sermon for the wonderful and glorious Current of Success of Her Majesties Forces, both by Sea and Land, in the First Year of Her Majesties Reign.

Pfal. 18. 49, 50. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and sing Praises unto thy Name.

Great deliverance giveth he to his King, and sheweth Mercy to his Anointed, to David and his Seed for evermore.

T His Psalm was Composed See the Argument and Paraphrase on this Psalm by the Lord Bishop of Ely.
 ' by David, and delivered by him to the
 ' Master of Musick in the Tabernacle,

‘ nacle, for a perpetual Comme-
‘ moration of Gods gracious Care
‘ over him, and Preservation of
‘ him, thro’ the whole Course of
‘ the long Persecution and Oppo-
‘ sition he met withal, before he
‘ could get the Kingdom ; For
‘ which singular Providence, he
‘ still gave particular Thanks to
‘ God after every Deliverance or
‘ Victory which he vouchsafed
‘ him, and at last, when he was
‘ peaceably settled upon his Throne,
‘ made one general Acknowledg-
‘ ment of Gods Goodness to him.

The Psalms have always deser-
vedly been esteemed the most no-
ble flights of Divine Poetry, that
ever have seen the Light, strains
so Melodious and Transporting,
that they give the devout Soul a
fore-taste of those Heavenly An-
thems and Hallelujahs, which are
offered up to God by the Blessed in
in

in Glory. But in this Psalm, the Royal Poet, and *sweet Singer of Israel*, seems to have Tun'd his Harp to a higher pitch than ordinary, that he might excel the rest of his Performances ; his Gratitude to God for such wonderful Mercies as he there Celebrates, seems to have kindled in his Breast a more sprightly Flame, and his Soul to have took its flight on the Wings of Love and Adoration.

In the beginning of this Psalm, *David* takes care to ascribe the Glory of his Deliverance to its due Author; not to his Bow or Spear, to his own Courage or Conduct, but to that God, *who was his Rock, his Fortrefs and Deliver-* Verf. 2.
er, his Strength, his Buckler, the Horn of his Salvation, and his high Tower. He goes on, to shew to what a low Condition he was reduced, and how unable to with-
stand

stand the Power and Malice of his Enemies; and that when he was at the lowest Ebb, *when the sorrows of death compassed him, and the floods of ungodly Men made him*
Verf. 4, 5. *afraid, when the sorrows of Hell compassed him about, and the snares of death prevented him*: Then, even in his greatest distress, he
Verf. 6. *called upon the Lord, and cryed unto his God: and he heard his Voice out of his Temple, and his Cry came before him, even into his Ears.* Then he proceeds to relate the manner of his Deliverance, and how wonderfully God made bare his Arm on his behalf, by sending a dreadful Tempest, and destroying his Enemies with Thunder and Lightning from Heaven; he describes his Victory over them in the most lofty and pathetick Strains of Divine Eloquence. *Then the Earth shook and trembled; the foundations of*
the

Sermon Eleventh.

411

the Hills moved, and were shaken, Verf. 7, 8,
because he was wroth. There went 9, 10, 11,
12, &c.
up a smoak out of his Nostrils, and fire
out of his Mouth devoured; Coals
were kindled by it. He bowed the
Heavens also, and came down:
and darkness was under his Feet.
And he rode upon a Cherub and did
fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings
of the Wind. He made darkness
his secret place: his Pavilion round
about him were dark Waters, and
thick Clouds of the Skies. At the
brightness that was before him, his
thick Clouds passed, Hail-stones and
Coals of Fire. The Lord also thun-
dered in the Heavens, and the High-
est gave his Voice; Hail-stones and
Coals of Fire. Yea, he sent out his
Arrows and scattered them; and he
shot out Lightning and discomfited
them; then the Channels of the Wa-
ters were seen, and the Foundations
of the World were discovered: at thy
rebuke

Verf. 21,
23, 24, 40,
43.

rebuke O Lord, at the blast of the Breath of thy Nostrils, &c. Never was Victory Painted in such lively Colours before, never was a Deliverance so Emphatically described. He proceeds to give the Reason, why God thus wonderfully aided and assisted him, because he had kept the ways of the Lord, and had not wickedly departed from his God, he was upright before him : and kept himself from his Iniquity. Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my Righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his Eyesight. Therefore the Lord gave me the Necks of mine Enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me. Nay, the Lord not only delivered him from his open Enemies, but from the strivings of the People, Civil Commotions, and the Contending Parties of his Kingdom;

dom; the Lord settled him firmly upon the Throne of *Israel* and *Judah*, whose Contentions ceased, and both these Kingdoms were united by him. He extended his Dominion over Foreign Nations, and the glory and renown of his Arms, to the utmost limits of the Universe.

Thou hast made me the Head of the ver. 43. *Heathen, a People whom I have not known shall serve me.* And thus having made these pious and devout Reflections on the Mercies he had received; he Concludes this Noble Poem, with the Expressions of his steady Resolutions of Trusting in God for the future, and his assurance, That that God who had hitherto delivered him, would still continue to be gracious unto him, and save him out of the hands of all his Enemies.

Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and

and sing Praises unto thy Name.

Great Deliverance giveth he to the King : and sheweth Mercy to his Anointed, to David, and to his Seed for evermore.

Which Words contain an earnest Exhortation to Praise and Thanksgiving. This Great Prince, not only declaring what he Resolv'd to do, but, by proposing his own Example to his Subjects, incites and stirs them up by the most prevailing Motive, to the performance of this Duty. And, that we may Obey the Commands, and Imitate the Pious and Devout Example of our Gracious Queen, in performing the Duty of this Day, with Hearts affected with a true Heavenly Joy and Gladness, and with the Voice of Praise and Thanksgiving, I shall endeavour in my following Discourse on these Words, to set forth

I. The

1. The Nature of this Duty of *Thanksgiving*, and of what parts it doth consist. 2. Which are the most proper and encouraging Motives to engage us to the performance of it: and particularly, I shall set before you those peculiar Favours which God hath vouchsafed to these Kingdoms, but more especially, that glorious Success of Her Majesties Arms both by Sea and Land, which gives Occasion to this Days Solemnity. 3. And Lastly, I shall Consider, what are the genuine Effects which a sincere and hearty Gratitude for these Mercies received, would produce in every one of us. Of these in their Order. And,

1. Of the Nature of this Duty, and of what parts it doth consist. The chief Ends why God created us were, that he might communicate his Goodness to us,
and

and that we might employ those Talents which we have received from him, to his Glory and Honour, and render him those Praises and Thanksgivings which are due unto his Holy Name. Our Reasonable Souls were given us to this purpose, and our Bodies fashioned into an erect Posture, that we might Contemplate the Works of Gods Creation and Providence, Reflect on the Mercies we continually receive from him, and by looking up to that Heaven from whence we received these Benefits; call to Mind our manifold Obligations, to return Praises and Thanksgivings to our bountiful Benefactor. So that Thanksgiving is nothing else, but the acknowledgment of those Benefits we have received from God, and the Expression of our Gratitude for them. And since we have not
Ability

Ability sufficient to pay him his due, much less to make him any suitable returns for his Bounty ; like well-meaning Bankrupts, to confess our indigency, and to pay him what we can. *Thanksgiving* taken in this Sense, may be properly said to consist of these two Parts : First, in a grateful Sense of those Mercies and Blessings which God has vouchsafed unto us: and Secondly, in a due acknowledgment of them by the Tongue. And first there must be a settled Principle of Gratitude within us, a Heart full fraught with Love and delightful Resentments of Gods Favours, which will be a perpetual Source, from whence grateful Expressions will continually flow; the Spring which will influence every Faculty of the Soul, and give Motion to the Active Powers of the Body, the Tongue, and the Hands. There is no

Sermon Eleventh.

Sacrifice so acceptable unto God, as a Soul enflamed with Love and Gratitude, whereby we not only Glorifie God, but enlarge our own Hearts, and render our selves more capable of receiving his Favours, and answering his Designs. For when our Fancies are possessed with glorious Images of Gods Goodness, our Passions and Affections will be elevated to a higher Pitch than ordinary, and exceed their usual Bounds. And he that has his Heart thus filled, cannot refrain from Praising God with his Tongue. If we carry this Fire in our Bosoms, it will heat and warm us, and whilst we muse on the Loving-kindness of the Lord, it will kindle and blow up into a Flame, and we shall declare the wonderful Works of God. *Bless the Lord O my Soul* (says the devout Psalmist)

Sermon Eleventh.

419

Psalmist) and all that is within me Ps. 103.
bless his Holy Name. My Soul shall ^{1.}
be filled with Marrow and Fatness,
and then my Mouth shall Praise thee
with faithful Lips. I will speak
of the glorious Honour of thy Ma-
jesty, and of thy wondrous Works.
I will sing of the Mercies of the
Lord for ever, and with my Mouth ^{63. 5.}
will I make known his faithfulness ^{6, 7-}
to all Generations. I have not hid
thy Righteousness in my Heart, I
have declared thy Faithfulness and
Salvation. I have not concealed thy
Loving-kindness and thy Truth from
the great Congregation. Nor shall
we be content to offer up this Sa-
crifice of Thanksgiving our selves,
but we shall endeavour to engage
others to join with us in this de-
vout Exercise; we shall invoke not
only Men like our selves, but
Saints and Angels, and all the Hea-
venly Quire, nay, Heaven and
Earth,

Earth, and all the inanimate Parts of the Creation; that his Glory may be extended as far as his Benefits, and that not only the Heathen (as in the Text) may know his wonderful Works; but the whole World resound with the Praises of our Good God and bountiful Benefactor. This is so properly the Employment of the Tongue, that 'tis therefore stiled *Mans Glory*, because its first and chiefest Employment, was to Praise and offer up Thanksgivings to God. For *Adam* could make no other use of Speech in Paradise before *Eve* was Created. And if so, then let us consider

2. Which are the most proper Motives and Encouragements, to engage us to the performance of this Duty. And these may be drawn, first, from the Consideration of the Act it self, *the Duty of Thanks*.

Thanksgiving. And Secondly, from the Reflection on the Subject this Duty is Conversant about, *viz.* Those excellent Gifts of Gods Bounty which he has bestowed upon us. And

1. If we Consider the Duty it self, it must needs appear, not only highly reasonable and necessary to be performed, but pleasant and delightful too. *Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good : Sing Praises unto his* Psal. 135.

Name, for it is pleasant. And ^{3.}147. 1.

again, *Praise the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises unto our God ; for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.* That we are backward in the performance of the other Duties of Religion, proceeds from hence; because there is something in them which is disgustful to our deprav'd Nature; Repentance recalls to our Minds the past follies of our Lives,

upbraids us with our Sins, and fills our Souls with Remorse and Sadness ; Prayer represents to us our Wants and Miseries, and exposes our needy and indigent Condition ; but *Thanksgiving* is a more pleasant and delightful Duty, it proceeds from self-complacency and good humour, it produces in our Minds gay and sprightly Thoughts, the most grateful *Ideas* of Gods Goodness, and by frequent acts of Devotion, raises up the Soul to a nearer Union with God, and keeps up our Conversation with him ; and hereby gives us a foretast and earnest of Heavenly pleasure. And by enuring us to meditate on the Loving-kindness of the Lord, and to recollect the Favours we have formerly received, to enjoy them over again, and bring back the pleasing sense and relish of them. Nor

is

is it only delightful, but a useful and profitable Duty too; for it exercises the Gifts, and encreases the Graces of Gods Holy Spirit in us; the Love of God becomes more fervent, by a continual Reflection on his Mercies received, our Faith more vigorous, by an Experimental Assurance of his Truth: It engages God to make good his Promises of bestowing more Blessings on that Man, who makes a right use of those which He has given him, and renders us more fit and better disposed to receive them. For God is a truly generous Benefactor, and delights not only to fill our Mouths with Praise, but our Hearts also with Joy and Gladness: And as those Steams and Vapours which are exhaled from the Earth, descend again in fruitful Showers, and refresh it when 'tis parched with

E c 4

heat:

heat : So those *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* which we offer up to God, redound at last to our Benefit, and will return into our own Bosoms. From these and such like Considerations, it will appear, how good and pleasant, how useful and profitable a thing it is to sing Praises to our God, and that we never consult our Interest, and seek our own Advantage more, than when we offer up our *Thanksgivings* to Heaven; so that this Duty is the Priviledge, and would be the choice of every considerate Person, tho' he lay under no Obligation to perform it. But because those who are most uneasy under Gods gentle Corrections, and remember longest those Injuries which have been done them, are generally most apt to forget Gods Mercies, and the good turns which they have received. Therefore

fore, I shall pass on to the second Motive, to engage us to offer up our Thanksgivings unto God.

2. The Consideration of the Subject about which this Duty is conversant, *viz.* those Mercies and Blessings which God has bestowed upon us. For there is no more proper Means to excite our Gratitude to God for past Benefits, than to recollect them frequently, and seriously to meditate on them. This was the Practice of that great Pattern of Gratitude, the Royal Psalmist. *I will remember thy Works of old* (says he)^{Ps. 77.}
I will meditate on all thy Works,^{12.}
and talk of thy doings. For the Reason why Gods Blessings and Benefits slip so soon out of our Memories, is because we do not consider and meditate on them. Our Minds are continually hurried on by our sensual Appetites,
and

Pf. 78.
11.

and turbulent Passions, our Thoughts employed about the Methods of gain, or in pursuit of the Pleasures of Life, and we are so taken up with the Hopes and Expectations of some future and imaginary Good, that the present, passes by us unregarded, and we are utterly unmindful of those Mercies which we have already enjoyed. The Psalmist tells us, *that they forgot his Works, and the Wonders that he had shewed them, they remembred not his Hand, nor the day that he delivered them from the Enemy.* And for this Reason, Places were set apart for Gods Worship, and Days of Publick Thanksgiving appointed, that Men might hereby be put in Mind of the Mercies they have received, and incited by the Place and Opportunity, to Praise and Adoration.

But

^{And} ~~But~~ ^{since} ~~because~~ the Mercies of God considered in the gross, are not so apt to arrest our Thoughts, or awaken our Gratitude, as when considered with those Circumstances which endear them to us ; it would be very useful, had I time, to reflect more particularly on the Excellency and Multitude of those Mercies which God bestows upon us ; to consider *that Gods Righteousness is like the great Mountains,* ^{Pf. 36.} *and his Judgments are a great Deep, his faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds,* and that the number of them exceeds the Sands on the Sea Shore, and generally are as little minded and regarded by us ; to call to Mind, how unworthy we are of the least of those Mercies which we have received, and yet, how miserable our Lives would become, if God should take them away, and deprive us of them.

them. And Lastly, how importunate we are with God, when we stand in need of any of those Blessings which we so much undervalue when we enjoy them.

But because we are most apt to be Affected with those Considerations, in which our Interest is most nearly concerned, I shall not at present insist on these general Topics (which will be useful Subjects for your private Meditations) but pass on to consider those Peculiar Favours which God has vouchsafed to that Church we are Members of, and that Nation in which we dwell, and Especially that prosperous Success of Her Majesties Forces, both by Sea and Land, and those Glorious Victories they have obtained, which give us the happy Occasion of meeting together this Day, and of offering up our Praises and
Thankf.

Thanksgivings unto God for them.

For tho' I cannot Subscribe to the wild Opinions and Fancies of some Enthusiasts, who expound many Passages in the Prophetical parts of the Holy Writ, by accommodating them to the Transactions of this Church and Nation; yet, this I think I may safely affirm, that if there has been any People under the Peculiar Care of Heaven, since the Dissolution of the *Jewish* Polity, they must needs be the Inhabitants of these Islands. God has shewr'd down upon us so many Mercies, both Temporal and Spiritual, that we seem to want nothing which might make us as completely happy as we can be in this World, but the right use of them, and a true Sense of our Condition; nay, we are possessed of many valuable Priviledges, which were never Indulged even to the
Jews

Jews themselves. Their Religion was vail'd under Mysterious Types and Ceremonies, and consisted of burthensome Observances of the Ceremonial and Judicial Law, a Yoke which they were never able to bear : Our Religion, in Precepts suitable to our Natures, laid down as plainly as Words can express them, and such as are agreeable to our Natures, and have a direct tendency to promote our Happiness even in this World. But that these Mercies of God may make a deeper Impression upon our Hearts, I shall consider them more particularly. And

1. God has placed us in a Land, abounding with every good thing, we have not only sufficient to satisfy the pressing necessities of Nature, but also to cloy our most craving Appetites, and to supply the defects of other Countries.

We

We live in greater security than other Nations, and enjoy our Lot and Portion with Peace and Quietness; and even in the heat of a Bloody War, we sit down under *Mic. 4.*
our own Vines, and tast the Fruit of⁴
our own Fig-trees; we are Surrounded and Fortified against the Assaults of Foreign Enemies on all Parts by the Sea, and secured against the Attempts, the subtil Plots and Contrivances of Domestic Incendiaries, by the most excellent and wholsom Laws. We are not disturbed in our Habitations by wild Beasts or poysonous Insects, nor are we terrified by the Convulsions of Nature in Hurricanes and Earthquakes; so that we have all the Reason in the World gratefully to acknowledge, *that our^{Pf. 16.}*
Lines are fallen in a pleasant Place.^{6.}
 Neither do our Spiritual Mercies fall short of our Temporal, God
 has

has demonstrated his particular Care of us, in causing his Gospel to be Preached to us in the most early Times, and in our speedy Conversion to the Christian Religion. For tho' we were divided from the rest of the habitable Earth, and as it were another World, yet it pleased God to Sow the good Seed of the Word here, by the immediate Successors of the Apostles, if not by the Apostles themselves; and in the very dawning of the Gospel, to deliver us from that thick Darkness of Heathenism and Idolatry, which had benighted the greatest part of the then known World: So that by the Planting of the Gospel in these Islands, the Prophecy of the Psalmist was literally accomplished; *That God would give his Son Christ the Heathen for his Inheritance; and the utmost parts of the Earth for his*

Pf. 2. 8.

his Possession. And the success of the Gospel, evidently shews these Countries, by an especial Prerogative, to be Christs Kingdom. For tho' the Christian Religion appear'd at first at *Jerusalem*, and received its Name at *Antioch*: Yet, *Great Britain* was honoured with the Birth of the first Christian King that ever laid his Scepter down at the Foot of Christs Cross; I mean the Renowned *Lucius*: And of *Constantine the Great*, the first Christian Emperor, who Established the Gospel thro' the then known World. And tho' other Kingdoms may Justly Glory in Princes, who have been Nursing Fathers of the Church, and *Sweden* may boast of one Christian Queen; yet, 'tis in *England* alone, where the Prophecy has been literally and fully accomplished; and *Queens have been Nursing Mo-* Isa. 49. 13.

F f

thers.

Sermon Eleventh.

thers of the Church ; for we have not only been Blessed with the long and Glorious Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, but even at this time is this Prophecy fulfilled in our Sight, by the happy Accession of our Gracious Queen *ANNE* to the Throne ; - whom God long Preserve.

These are peculiar Favours, for which we ought to be particularly Thankful, but more especially, for Delivering us from the Idolatry and Superstition of the Church of *Rome*, and Restoring to us the Primitive Purity of our Religion, by a Blessed Reformation.

For when the Zeal of the *Romish* Church (which in the Times of the Apostles, and succeeding Ages, was Famous for its Purity and Devotion) had degenerated into Idolatry and Superstition, and the Governours and Pastors of it, being

being biaſſed by Covetouſneſs and Ambition, had by degrees introduced ſo many Novelties in Doctrine and Worſhip, had ſuperadded ſo many Traditions to the written Word of God, and made ſo many Corrupt, nay, Contradictory Gloſſes and Interpretations of it, that the Chriſtian Religion ſeemed to be totally deprav'd, and to become a quite different thing, from that Rational and ſimple, pure, and peaceable Doctrine, and devout way of Worſhip, taught by our Saviour and his Apoſtles ; then it pleaſed God, out of his Infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, to ſnatch us like Fire-brands out of the Fire, and to ſet us apart a choſen People to himſelf, by a bleſſed Reformation. That God who makes uſe of what Inſtruments he pleaſes, to bring about the Wiſe Deſigns of

his Providence, in whose Hands
Prov. 21. 1. *are the Hearts of Kings, and who*
turneth them whithersoever he plea-
ses, as he turneth the Rivers of
Water; 'twas he alone who raised
up that magnanimous Prince,
King Henry VIII. and infused into
his Royal Heart such Courage, as
put him upon that bold and daring
Attempt of throwing off the into-
lerable Yoke of Papal Usurpation;
he enabled him to bring it to
Effect, by ordering such a *Crisis*
of Affairs, that the Reformation,
which was partly begun on a Se-
cular Account, ended in the Ad-
vancement of his Glory, and
the Settlement of the most pure
and holy Religion amongst us.
For he was pleased to assist those,
who were employed in this
great Work, in so signal and
extraordinary a manner with his
Holy Spirit, and to enlighten their
Minds

Minds with the Knowledge of the Truth, and so wonderfully to influence all their Consultations for the good of the Church ; that, laying aside all Prejudice, Interest, and Passion, they kept the Golden Mean, between the Pomp of Superstitious Tyranny, and the Meanness of Phanatick Anarchy : In-
somuch that there is no unbiassed Man, who seriously considers the Doctrine and Worship of the Church of *England* ; but he must needs discern in it the Lineaments of Primitive Faith and Devotion. A Church so much admired by the more imperfect reformati-
ons of some Neighbouring Countries, that, notwithstanding the Value and Esteem which Men generally set upon that Usage, which Education and Custom has endear'd to them ; yet, many of them have been forced to confess, that 'tis the best Reform-

ed, and comes nearest to the Original Pattern of Primitive Purity, and has the most Apostolical Canons and Constitutions of any in the World. Nay, those who have made it their business to find fault with it, and have put every Syllable of our Liturgy upon the Rack, that they might discover some faults to lay to its Charge; yet, have only accused it of some *tolerabiles Ineptiæ*; some Rites which they judge unfit and improper, and that probably, because they have themselves contrived some Modes of Worship, which (as they Fancy) would do better in the room of them. And let Men busie their heads never so long in devising Plat-forms of Church-Government, yet, the most of them will prove Impracticable, and none of them will be attended with fewer Inconveniencies than ours,

ours, which was certainly of Apostolical Institution, and has underwent the Test of 17 hundred Years. And if so, then how great a Blessing is the continuance of this Excellent Religion to us, notwithstanding the incessant Attempts of our restless and unwearied Adversaries, and the demerit of our many crying Sins and repeated provocations. For, if we consider the Number, Strength and Policy, of our avowed Enemies the Papists, and the perfidious Treachery of such amongst us who either betray the Rights of the Church, or undermine its Constitution, and we shall soon conclude, That 'tis only Gods watchful Care and Protection of us, which supports our Labouring Church, and preserves it from utter desolation and Ruin. Thanks be to God, who hath hitherto defeated their evil Designs,

and Hellish Plots, and render'd all their Attempts abortive and unsuccessful : The Church of *England* like an Arch'd Building, has stood more firm and secure, for the Weight that has been laid upon it, and the Force that has been used against it ; and those Engines which have been made use of to destroy it, have only produced

Ps. 118. 23. *Bruta fulmina. This is the Lords doing, and it ought to be marvellous in our Eyes.* Nor has God been less Kind and Indulgent to us with Relation to our Civil Government ; The Laws of our Land, like those of our God, are Righteous, Just, and Good, founded on Justice, and Cemented with Equity ; and our Constitution is the best Tempered of any Political Body in the World. 'Tis our Happiness that we live under a Mix'd-Monarchy, where the Pre-rogative

rogative of the Prince, and the Liberties of the Subject, are equally Ballanced, and have such Bounds and Limits, as conduce to their mutual Safety and Welfare. A Government peculiarly adapted to the Genius of the *English* Nation, and by long Continuance become Natural to it; and therefore when tamper'd with by State-Empyricks, it will suffer Tremblings and Convulsions, and (like the Mariners Needle) will never be at rest, till it comes to its true Poise.

But because those Mercies have the most powerful Influence upon us, which are most fresh in our Memories, and in which our present Interest is concerned. Let us therefore more particularly reflect upon those Blessings which give us the happy Occasion of Keeping this Day as a Time of Publick Rejoycing, and of offering up
our

our Praises and Thanksgivings for the Victories obtained by the Blessing of God on her Majesties Forces both by Sea and Land.

When our late Warlike and Valiant Prince was taken away from us, we were struck with such Panick Fears, as if our safety had depended solely on his Sword, and the *English* Courage and Bravery was to expire with his Life. But, since it hath pleased God to settle Her Majesty on the Throne of Her Ancestours, whose Royal Heart is possessed with the Spirit of Courage and Magnanimity, of Prudence and Conduct, of Piety and Devotion; and has endeared the beginning of Her Reign to us with Glory, Victory, and wonderful Success; since he has raised up so many *Worthies* amongst us to fight our Battels, to put a Hook in the Nose
of

of the great *Leviathan*, and not only to set Bounds to the Conquests of our Potent and Formidable Enemy; but has extended the Antient Glory of the *English* Nation, to the utmost Parts of the habitable Globe; since God has given Her Majesty what we have long Prayed for; the Hearts of Her Subjects, and the Necks of Her Enemies, and delayed the Harvest of our Prayers, that he might Bless us at last with a more plentiful Crop; since God has made Bare his Arm on our behalf, and it appears that he is not only *the God of the Mountains, but of* ^{1 King. 20.} *the Vallies*; by giving us Victory ^{28.} both by Sea and Land; and Lastly, since he has demonstrated to us by many signal and remarkable Circumstances, that our good Success is owing to the Vigilant Conduct of his Good Providence: Let

us therefore take Care that we do not divert the Stream of his Loving-kindness from us, by our Ingratitude, and hereby forfeit our Title to his future Favours and Protection. Let us *pay our Vows to God in the midst of his Sanctuary*, and offer up unto him *the calves of our Lips*. And let us not satisfy our selves with a Verbal Acknowledgment, but bring forth Fruits worthy of so great Mercies, and demonstrate our hearty Gratitude to God, by a suitable Demeanour of our selves, in our Lives and Conversations. Which brings me to shew

3. Which are the true and genuine Effects of an Heart full fraught with Gratitude, and a serious Sense of Gods Benefits.

1. If our Hearts are affected with a grateful Sense of Gods Mercies, it will produce in us a
firm

firm Trust and Dependence on God, for all the Blessings of this Life and a better. *The Righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and trust in him, and all the upright in Heart shall glory.* The Remembrance of those great things which God has done for us, will strengthen our Dependence on him for the future, and establish in our Minds a fulness of Confidence, and steady Assurance, that he who has hitherto provided for us, protected and delivered us from all our Enemies, will never leave us or forsake us. For every Good Man believes; *That Gods Ear is not heavy that he cannot hear, nor is his Arm shortned that he cannot save;* he neither wants Will nor Power, to defend those who commit themselves to his safe-keeping.

2. A Grateful Sense of Gods Benefits

Benefits, will engage us to live holy and unblameable Lives, and to do as much good as we can in our several Places and Stations. For the more sensible we are of our great and manifold Obligations to God, the more deeply will our Minds be affected with a filial Fear of his Anger, and the more ready and desirous we shall be to serve and please him. 'Tis St. *Chrisostom's* Observation concerning Prayer, which may with equal Reason be applied to this Duty of *Thanksgiving*: That he who offers up this Sacrifice with an Heart seriously affected with the Duty he is about, can never allow himself in any habitual Course of Sin; he must either leave off sinning, or forbear Giving-thanks; the one being directly opposite to the other.

*Tom. 5.
pag. 76.*

For

For a Man that is truly sensible of Benefits received, will be careful that he doth not disoblige his Friend and Benefactor, he will refrain from all such Words and Actions as are offensive to him, and order his Behaviour after such a manner, as will be most likely to gain his Esteem and Favour. If therefore we are truly thankful for those Mercies we have received from God; we shall order our Lives and Conversations according to his Word, and forsake every evil Way, and Repent of those Sins which provoke God, not only to deprive us of those good things he has already bestowed upon us, but to withhold his hand for the future. For, as the Prophet tells us, 'tis our Iniquities which turn away those things (i. e.) Gods Blessings, and our Sins which withhold good things from

from us. 'Tis our sinful Lives which restrain God from doing Good to us both in our Publick and Private Capacities; we hereby dishonour our Holy Religion, we weaken the Hands of those who Fight for us; we provoke him to give us up to our Enemies, by being guilty of the worst of all Vices, the basest Ingratitude in the World.

Nor will our Thankfulness to God for his Mercies, engage us only to *cease from Evil*, but also to *do Good*. And therefore Samuel makes use of the consideration of Gods Benefits, as the most likely and prevailing Motive to engage the People of *Israel* to serve God.

1 Sam. 12.
24.

Only fear the Lord, and serve him with Truth, and with all your Heart, for consider how great things he has done for you. A serious and devout Reflection on the Goodness

ness and Bounty of our great Benefactor will engage every honest Receiver to make what Returns he is able : and tho' God neither stands in need of any thing, nor is capable of receiving any real Advantage from us, or any addition to his Happiness; yet he expects that we should express our willingness to serve him, and, by our obedient and dutiful Behaviour, to please and content him.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits? (says David)

I will take the Cup of Salvation, Psal. 116. 13.
and call upon the Name of the Lord.

I will offer to him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, I will pay my Vows unto the Lord. For 'tis but reasonable, that the great Lord and Governour of the Universe, should require from us the Homage of our Deeds as well as our Words, and that we should pay him the

G g Tribute

Sermon Eleventh.

Tribute of a Holy Life, and unblamable Conversation. Under the *Mosaical* Law, the *Jews* were required to dedicate the first Fruits of their Lands, of their Cattel, and of their Bodies, and the Tenth of their Encrease unto God, whereby 'twas denoted to us, that since all the Good things that we enjoy, are the gifts of Gods Bounty, therefore we ought to make use of them to advance his Glory, and promote his Honour in the World. Let us therefore offer up unto God, pure and holy Thoughts, devout Affections, and our most active and vigorous Endeavours to serve and please him. Let us mortifie every Lust and unruly Passion, and abandon all the inordinate desires of the Flesh, let us give him our Hearts, and resign up our Wills to his Divine Will. Let us make good
our

our Resolutions of forsaking every evil Way, and pay him those Vows which we have made unto him. Let us yield a sincere Obedience to his Commands, and offer up to him the acceptable Sacrifice of a harmless and unblamable Conversation all the days of our Lives. These are the Offerings with which God is well pleased, and will accept of, as the real Testimonies of our Thankfulness, and the grateful Returns of his Benefits. For as the wise Son of Syrack Informs us. *He that keepeth the Law*, Eccles. 35. *bringeth Offerings enough, he that taketh heed to the Commandments, offereth a Peace-offering. He that requiteth a good turn, offereth fine Flower, and he that giveth Alms, sacrificeth Praise. To depart from Wickedness, is a thing pleasing to*

the Lord : and to forsake unrighteousness, is a Propitiation.

3. A grateful Sense of Gods Mercies, will produce in us the most generous and comprehensive Charity. For since we cannot repay the Gifts of Gods bounty, we shall endeavour to make what returns we are able, by doing as much good as we can to those whom he has made his Proxies, to receive our grateful Returns and Acknowledgments. In the first place, we shall make it our business to promote Love, Peace, and Unity, both in the Church and State, and contribute our utmost Efforts to quell our unnatural Animosities, to compose our Differences, and make up those Breaches, whereby we weaken our selves, and give occasion to the Enemies of our Religion and Country to Rejoyce : That so with united For-

ces

ces and Prayers, we may oppose the Common Enemy, and *play the Men, for the People, and for the Cities of our God.* For 'tis the Observation of an excellent Author, that *England* is a vivacious Animal, and can never be destroyed, but by the Brood that proceeds out of its own Bowels. We may defie the Malice of our Foreign Enemies, unless by our Intestine Heats and Animosities, we forge our own Shackles, and contribute to our own Ruin. And ^{2 Sam. 10.} for these Divisions, every Good ^{12.} Man will have *great Thoughts of Heart*; because they afford the most ready Handle to our Adversaries of the Church of *Rome*, to reproach us. For when they have nothing to answer to our convincing Arguments, when they are Confuted both by Scripture and Reason, then their only shift is to

Eph. 4. 3.

upbraid us with our numerous Divisions : They Object against us, that we do not keep the *Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace*, but are crumbled into innumerable Sects and Parties, that we have no common Standard of our Faith, and agree in nothing, but only in differing from them. And I could heartily wish, there was no truth in the Objection: God knows, there is too great a difference in Opinion amongst us, and we are in a great measure beholding to the Emissaries of the Church of *Rome* for it, who sow these Tares, whilst we are secure and quarelling amongst our selves.

- Let me therefore beseech all good Protestants, who have any true Zeal for the Publick Good, that laying aside all Moroseness, Sourness & Peevishness, all private Interest, Prejudice and Passion, which long Custom, or an unhappy Education

on may render them liable to; they would examine Matters calmly, take every thing in the most candid and charitable Sense, and then, if they doubt of any thing, I question not but God in his good time, will reveal even that to them. And let us, who profess our selves the true Sons of the Church of *England*, and the Members of the most holy, pure, and peaceable Community, endeavour by little and little, to conquer their Prejudices, let us treat them with a courteous and mild behaviour, and if possible, draw them over to us with the Cords of Love. And let all of us unite our selves, first, by Holiness unto God, and then by Love and Charity one towards another, and then we shall have no reason to be afraid of the stoutest *Goliath's*, who have defied the Armies of the living God ;

then God will continue to do good unto us, and bestow on us the most desirable Blessings, *viz.* Plenty and Peace, or else Victory in this World, and a Crown of Glory in the next.

And, since 'tis the Nature of true Charity, to be extensive, Let us endeavour to be beneficial to every particular Person with whom we Converse, by doing all the good Offices we are able to their Souls, Bodies, Estates, and Reputations, and especially, by a free and liberal dispensing of our Worldly Goods, to those who stand most in need of our Charitable help and assistance. For whatsoever kindness we shew to them, our Saviour will look upon it as done to himself, and place it upon his Account. Inasmuch as ye have done it (*i. e.*) *fed the hungry, cloathed the naked, and comforted*

comforted the afflicted, to one of the ^{Matt. 25.}
 least of these my Brethren, ye have^{42.}
 done it unto me. And he that hath
 pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the ^{Prov. 19.}
 Lord : and look what he layeth out,
 it shall be paid him again. Be mer-
 ciful therefore after thy power. If
 thou hast much, give plenteously, ^{Tob. 4. 8,}
 If thou hast little, do thy diligence
 gladly to give of that little : for so
 gatherest thou thy self a good Re-
 ward in the day of Necessity. For
 God is not unrighteous, that he
 will forget his Works, and La-
 bour that proceedeth of Love : ^{Heb. 6.}
 Which Love ye have shewed for ^{10.}
 his Name sake, who have Mini-
 stred to the Saints, and yet do Mi-
 nister. To be thus Charitable to
 our Neighbour, is the best way to
 do good to our selves, for whilst
 we thus fill the hungry with good ^{Luk. 1. 53.}
 things, we shall not be sent empty
 away ; our own Repast will relish
 the

the better, and our Souls will be replenished with Joy and Gladness. And therefore, I shall conclude all with the Words - of Nch. 8, 12. *Nehemiah. Go your way, eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet (tho' with Temperance and Sobriety) but do not forget to send Portions to them for whom nothing is prepared.*

28 IV 58

The End of the Eleventh Sermon.

SER-

S E R M O N XII.

Job 2: 10. Part of that Verse.

Shall we receive good at the hand of God? And shall we not receive evil?

THese Words are the Answer of pious and holy *Job* to his wicked Wife. *Dost thou still retain thy Integrity?* (says she in the Verse before the Text) *Curse God and Die.* But he said unto her, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive*

ceive evil? And then 'tis added, *in all this did not Job Sin with his Lips.* God was pleased to afflict holy *Job* after an extraordinary manner, to make him an eminent Example of Patience, and to propose him as a Pattern for the Imitation of after Ages. And his Afflictions were so much the more grievous, and sat the heavier upon him; because he had enjoy'd a full gale of Prosperity, and was reduced from a plentiful Fortune, and the most flourishing Condition, to the most indigent and miserable state of Life. He was one of the wealthiest Men in the East, He had seven thousand Sheep, and three thousand Camels; and five hundred she Asses, and a very great Household, as you may learn from the third Verse of the first Chapter. He had a numerous and hopeful Off-spring, seven Sons and three

Job 1. 3.

three Daughters, grown up to be Men and Women. He was not only thus rich in Children, in Flocks and Herds, the Wealth of the Eastern Countries, but also in the more valuable Riches of his own Mind; he was a Wise and a good Man, one who knew how to make the best Improvement of these good things, and after what manner they ought to be enjoyed; so that he seemed to be as happy as this World could make him. When, see the mutability and uncertainty of this Worlds Goods, and how little Reason we have to set our Hearts upon them! In a very short Time, the Scene was altered; and this Great, this Rich, this good Man, was reduced to the utmost extremity of Want and Misery. *Whilst his Oxen were ploughing, and the Asses feeding by them, the Sabæans fell upon them, and took them* Ver. 14

Ver. 16.

Ver. 17.

them away, and slew his Servants with the Edge of the Sword, leaving only one alive to give him an account of this Calamity; who had not quite delivered his Message, before another of his Servants (as Evils seldom come single) came to tell him, that there had been a very dreadful Lightning in those parts where his Sheep were feeding, which had consumed both them and the Shepherds, and left none surviving, but himself alone. He had not finished his Narration, before another Messenger was at the Door, saying, Our Neighbours, the Caldeans, seeking for Booty, divided themselves into three Bands, and set upon us all at once, and have carried away all the Camels, and killed all the rest of the Servants that looked after them; and I only made a shift to save my self by flight. Before he had concluded,

came

came in another, and the most
 doleful Messenger of all, and
 brought him an account, That as
 his *Children were Feasting at their
 Elder Brothers House, a violent
 Wind arose, and took away the four
 Corners of it, and buried them all* ^{Ver. 19.}
*under its Ruins, and not one of the
 Guests escaped, but only the Messen-
 ger of this great Calamity. When
 Job (who had heard all the rest
 without any evident disturbance)*
 was informed of the death of his
 Children, this touched him in the
 most sensible Part, Grief took
 possession of his Soul, and he
 made the most visible Demonstra-
 tions of it; *he rent his Mantle,* ^{Ver. 20.}
*shaved his Head, and fell down up-
 on the Ground. But yet he did
 not charge God foolishly, for the
 Text tells us, that he Worshipped,
 saying, Naked came I out of my
 Mothers Womb, and naked shall I* ^{Ver. 21.}
 return

return thither, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; Blessed be the Name of the Lord. One would think that by the concurrence of so many Misfortunes, and by a dutiful and submissive Behaviour under them, *Job* had given a sufficient Testimony of his Integrity; but yet there remained one more Tryal behind still : and, that the Character of *Job's* Patience might be rendered more Illustrious, God permitted the Devil to wreak his utmost Malice upon him, and to afflict him in his Body, from Top to Toe, with a fiery Ulcer ; whose sharp humour was so extream painful and noisom, that his Acquaintance could not endure to come near him, and even his Wife (from whom he might expect Comfort in this deplorable Condition) grieved his Righteous Soul, with that prophane Speech,
Dost

dost thou still retain thy Integrity? Curse God and Die. 'Tis true, there are different Interpretations of this Passage: Some will have the Words rendered, Bless God and Die; the same Word in the Original, signifying Blessing, and Cursing; others will have them Translated, Pray to God that thou mayest Die: Others think the Sence of them to be, thou hast now nothing else to do, but to make thy Peace with God, and Die: Others, Curse God, that thou mayest Die; Death being the Punishment of those under the Law, who Blasphemed the Name of God: Or else, render them thus, Why dost thou still continue to Serve that God, who has brought upon thee so great Calamities? rather affront and provoke him, that he may Kill thee, and put an end to thy Misery. But I rather chuse to

H h

close

Sermon Twelfth.

close with the Paraphrase of an Excellent Commentator, who thus expresses the Sense of these Words.

‘What a folly is it still to persist in
‘the Service of God? when all thou
‘gettest by it, is to give him Thanks,
‘and Perish. But, which Interpre-

tation soever you take, they are all of them such, as Justifie *Job*’s gentle Reproof in the following Verse, the Words of the Text.

Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women speaketh; What? shall we receive good at the Hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?

Which Words contain in them, such Considerations as *Job* made use of to support himself under all his Calamities: Which were chiefly these following.

1. That God is the Author of all those Events which happen to us in this Life, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

2. That

2. That 'twas God, who first gave us those good things which sometimes he sees fit to deprive us of.

3. That God doth always Chequer the good with the bad: Tho' he takes away some good things, yet he leaves us others which are more valuable.

4. That all those Evils which befall us, are such, as we have many ways deserved.

Lastly, That we have as much Reason to be thankful for the Evils which we suffer, as we have for the Good which God bestows upon us.

1. That God is the Author of all those Events which happen unto us, whether Good or Bad. 'Twas the Opinion of some Antient Hereticks, that there were two Principles, from whence all Effects did proceed; a good Being, who

furnished us with all the Comforts of Human Life, and an evil Being, who was the Author of all those Crosses and Misfortunes, Diseases and Maladies, which afflict Mankind. They could not imagine, how so good and beneficent a Being as God is, should suffer his Children and Servants to want any good thing, or to labour under any Calamities, when 'twas in his Power to remove them. Can a tender Parent, say they, take any delight in hearing the deep Sighs, and mournful Complaints of his dear Children? Will not his Bowels yern towards them? Can he be so cruel as to mock their Misery, *to give them*

Matth. 7. 9. a Stone instead of Bread, or a Serpent instead of a Fish, such things as are so far from relieving their Wants, that they will encrease their Misery, and add to the Load
which

which lies so heavy upon them. Now, such false Reasonings as these, did proceed from this common Mistake, that nothing is good for us, which is not agreeable to our corrupt Appetites and sensual Inclinations; and that all manner of Calamities, and Afflictions proceed from a malevolent Aspect of the Deity, and the Anger of God towards those on whom they are inflicted. Whereas 'tis evident, that those *whom God Loves, he sometimes chastens, and correcteth e-*^{Heb. 12.}
very Son whom he receiveth. Which I shall only note now, because I shall have occasion hereafter to enlarge upon this Point. 'Tis evident, that as God was alone the sole Creator of the World, so, he continually superintends and governs Human Affairs. *Is*^{Amos 3. 6.}
there any Evil in the City, and the Lord has not done it, says the Pro-

phet (*i. e.*) any. Evil of Punishment; for as to the Evil of Sin, God is not the Author of it, tho' he may Justly permit it (*i. e.*) having made Man a free Creature, he may suffer him to act according to the Liberty of his Will, whether Good or Evil. In which Case God only concurs to the Action, but not to the sinfulness of the Action; which proceeds from the perverseness of Mans Will. Now if all the Afflictions and Calamities, as well as the Comforts and Blessings of Life, proceed from God, and are the determinations of his Good Providence; how highly Just and Reasonable is it, That we should receive the one at his Hands quietly, patiently, and contentedly, as well as the other? What more powerful Argument can be made use of, to perswade Men to be patient and contented

contented under Affliction, than to consider, that all the Evil we can endure, is inflicted by the Hand of the Great and Wise Governour of the World, who has not only an absolute Right to deal thus with us, but pursues the most wise and noble Ends in so doing?

Shall the Clay say to the Potter, why II. 45. 9.

hast thou made me thus? Much less have we, poor vile Worms, any reason to charge God thus foolishly, and to rise up against our Maker. 'Tis the God who

Created us, the God who Governs the World; and continually preserves us and protects us, who sends those Evils upon us; and shall we not receive them at his Hand contentedly and chearfully?

It would be as easie for him to give us a full Gale of Prosperity, to furnish us with all that our hearts can wish; but since he sees

fit to deal otherwise by us, we ought to acquiesce in his good pleasure, and to submit our selves, and all our concerns, to the Wise disposal of Divine Providence.

2. Let us consider, that the good things which God sees fit to deprive us of, were at first the Gifts of Gods Bounty. We are deprived of our Health, of our Cattel, our Riches, our Friends, nay, our most dearly beloved Children. But let us consider, that all these were the Gifts of God, and proceeded at first from his bountiful Hand; there was a time when we had them not, and when we had them, we could challenge no absolute Right and Propriety in them: They were only committed to our keeping, 'till it should please God to demand them of us again; and then 'tis our Duty to resign them as willingly, and freely,

ly, as ever we took possession of them. *For shall we only receive Good at the Hands of God, but not Evil?* Shall we be always on the receiving hand, but never restore again? Is it not Just, that God should require his own when he pleases? And yet, how common is it for Men to murmur and repine, nay, even to dispute the Right with God, and to imagine, that God doth them an Injury, when he requires of them those good things, which he only committed to their Trust. God gives us Wealth, and we receive it chearfully; he bestows upon us Children, and we Caress them with pleasure and delight; but when God sees fit, by his good Providence, to deprive us of any of these Enjoyments; who is there that behaves himself with due temper and moderation? Do we not
for

for the most part, murmur and complain; Do we not break out into exorbitant Passions, and unbecoming Expressions? Was not *Jonah*, tho' a Prophet of the Lord, transported with sinful and extravagant Anger, only because God deprived him of his Gourd? and is not this the Practice of most Men, tho' Reason and Christianity dictate the quite contrary to us?

3. Consider, that God always Chequers the good with the bad; and tho' he is pleased to take away some good things from us, yet he leaves us others, which are more valuable to us. Whatsoever we enjoy, is the Gift of Gods Bounty, and therefore God may Justly with-hold his Hand. And yet, God is pleased always *in the midst of Justice, to remember Mercy*. And tho' we want some things which we could wish for, yet we have
others

others remaining, the want of which, would create greater uneasiness in us. We are apt indeed to imagine that we could endure any Pain better than that we at present feel; or any Calamity, rather than that we labour under; and to cry out in the anguish of our Minds, *is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?* And yet, were it possible to change our troubles with those of other Men, or to commute for Punishments of another Nature, we should be glad to take up with our own burthen again. The Crosses we meet with, & the Calamities we groan so lamentably under, are for the most part, only the loss of some of the superfluities of Life; things we may well enough want, and yet pass away our time easily and comfortably in this World. We complain perhaps, that we have suffered

ferred great losses in our Estates, that we have been blemish'd in our Reputation, that we have been unworthily dealt with; but why should such losses as these render any good Man Miserable? Has he not many more valuable Blessings left him? Has he not still sufficient Food and Rayment, enough to support him during his short stay in this World, and ought he not therewith to be content? And tho' God touch us in the nearest and most tender part of us, and take away from us the delight of our Eyes, and the Joy of our Hearts; a hopeful, dutiful, and only Child, or a dearly beloved Wife, the sharer of our Fears, and the Partner of our Joys; tho' he should touch us to the quick, and *chastise our Bodies, for the Sin of our Souls,* and we should be afflicted (like *Job*) with a painful and loathsome Disease,

Disease, from Head to Foot; yet what Reason has a *living Man* to Lam. 3. *complain, a Man for the Punish-*^{39.} *ment of his Sin.* Whilst we are on this side the Grave, whilst we are on this side Hell, we have reason to Praise and Magnifie the Name of our God, for his unmerited Favours vouchsafed unto us. How many are there, who are snatch-
ed away in the midst of their Sins, by a sudden and unthought of Death, and are called to give an account of their Deeds; whilst we have time, and opportunity indulged us, to make our Peace with God, and to work out our Salvation. The continuing of us in the Land of the Living, the affording us the Means of Grace, and the Hopes of Salvation, are such inestimable Blessings, that we might Justly be engaged to Magnifie the Name of God for them,
tho'

tho' we were deprived of many of the rest. And yet God has not been sparing or niggardly of his Favours to us; the generality of Mankind enjoy the materials of a comfortable Life, and those who repine and murmur most, and make the loudest Complaints, are generally such Persons, who bring these Calamities upon themselves, by their own folly; and make themselves miserable.

4. And therefore, let us consider that all those Evils which we suffer, are only such as we have Justly deserved. We are not only slothful and unfruitful Servants, who have neglected our Duty, but we have heinously violated the Laws, and disobeyed the Will of our Master; we have broke out into open Rebellion against God, and have been guilty of the basest Ingratitude, and of the

the most heinous and crying Sins, by abusing his Patience, and taking occasion, from his Love and Kindness to us, more Impudently to affront him ; and therefore have reason to expect that the full Vials of Gods Wrath and Indignation should be poured out upon us. And since he has not dealt with us according to our Deserts, Essais de Morale. P. 104. but has only inflicted some lighter Punishments upon us, to rouse up and awaken us, that we may flee from the Wrath to come; therefore we ought to receive these gentle Corrections with Humility, Submissiveness, and Contentedness; and to say (with the Prophet) *Thou hast punished me less than mine Iniquities deserve, I will therefore bear the Indignation of* Mich. 7.9. *the Lord, because I have sinned against him.* But on the contrary, how apt are we to murmur and
repine

repine against God, when he deprives us of any of those good things he has given us, or suffers the least of those Pains and Calamities to Afflict us, to which our Condition in this World renders us continually exposed? Nay, we too often *charge God foolishly*, when our Misfortunes have been the Just Consequences of our Evil Deeds, and we our selves have been the principal Instruments in bringing them upon us. For there is a Punishment which naturally follows every Evil Act; and, for the most part, those Mischiefs which befall us in this World, are the results of our own Folly and Wickedness. And therefore we have all the Reason in the World upon this Account to be humble under Gods Rod, and to lay our Mouths in the Dust, since our Punishment is not only the Just De-

merit

merit of our Sin, but also the Reasonable Consequence of it.

Lastly, Let us consider, That we have as much Reason to be thankful for the Evils we suffer, as for those Good things which God bestows upon us. For both these may prove either Blessings or Curses to us, according to that use and improvement which we make of them. For 'tis a difficult Matter to determine, whether Prosperity or Adversity is best for us; either of them may be for our welfare, or else, a Snare to us, or an Occasion of falling. If we make a right use and improvement of those good things God has given us; if we imploy these Talents to the use for which they were bestowed upon us; and take Occasion from hence to be more useful in our Generation, more thankful to God,

more charitable to the Poor, then are they truly Mercies or Blessings to us. But if the Good things of this World make us Proud and high Minded ; if they administer Fuel to our Luxury ; if they encrease our thirst and greedy desire after more ; if we set our Affections on them ; then to have the desires of our Hearts granted to us, is the most deplorable Condition we can fall into ; and the good things which we enjoy in this Life, will but render our Misery more Intolerable in the next. On the other hand, if our Afflictions are sanctified to us, if they render us more humble, more mortified, more patient, more charitable ; if they exercise our Graces, and perfect our Vertues, then have we good Reason to be thankful for them, and to conclude ; That it
was

was good for us to be afflicted.
 But if we are the more hardned,
 the longer we lie upon the An-
 vil of Affliction, and if we grow
 more stubborn and obstinate, and
revolt more and more; then our Ca-
 lamities in this World, are only
 the beginning of our Sufferings,
 and the Entrance into a more mi-
 serable Condition, which will be
 our Portion to all Eternity here-
 after. God alone knows which
 will be best for us, and therefore
 we have all reason to say with
Job in the Text, Shall I receive
Good at the Hand of God? And
shall I not receive Evil? Doth not
 my Heavenly Father know which is
 best for me? And will not all
 things work together for my good,
 whilst I Serve him? Give me thy
 Grace, O Lord, to be humble in
 Prosperity, patient in Adversity :
 And then come Life, come Death,

come Good, or come Evil, either of them shall be equally acceptable to me. Do thou draw me, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit; and then in every State of Life, and in every Condition, I will run after thee. It was thy good pleasure to make me one of the richest and happiest Men in the East (might *Job* say) thou gavest me every good thing, and till this time, I have lived in a plentiful and flourishing Condition; I have hitherto enjoyed them with a thankful Heart, and an obedient Will: But since thou see'st fit to take them away, to deprive me of these Comforts, which through thy unmerited Goodness, I have so long enjoyed, 'tis very Just and fitting that I should submit to thy Divine pleasure; I have already received Good at thy Hands, why should I not receive Evil?
Only

Only give me Strength to bear up under my Burthen, and support me continually with supplies of thy Grace, and I will readily and chearfully undergo whatsoever thou art pleased to lay upon me.

Such Thoughts as these do naturally result from the Words of the Text, which being duly weighed and considered, it only remains, that we learn from them, these two short Lessons.

1. The uncertainty of our State and Condition in this World. No Man can be truly happy in this Life, because 'tis uncertain how long he may be so. All the Enjoyments of this World, *take* Prov. 23.5. *to themselves Wings and flee away*, when we think our selves most securely possessed of them. We know not *what a Day may bring* Prov. 27.1. *forth*; for even in the compass of that short Period of Time, we

may be reduced to the most Indigent Condition. Doth any one question this? Do not those Calamities which beset *Job*, give him a sufficient Instance of this Worlds mutability? Who could have imagined, that in so short a space of time, there would have been so great an alteration in his Fortunes? That he, who was the Wealthiest Man in the East, the Richest part of the then known World, and the Object of all Mens Respect and Veneration, should so soon become a loathsome Spectacle, forsaken of his Friends, and destitute of all manner of Succour and Comfort? till we consider, that both our Good and Evil, proceed from the same Hand, and that all the Affairs of this World are directed by a Superiour Power, who, as seems best to him, *exalts one, and pulls down*

*down another, That all the World may know, that the Lord Reigns, and that there is a God who judg-
eth the World.* Psal 58.11.

2. Let us learn to improve all the Dispensations of Gods Providence, to our best Interest, and truest Advantage. Let us take the Advice of the Wise Man. *In the Day of Prosperity be Joyful, but in the Day of Adversity consider : God also has set the one, over against the other, to the end that Man should find nothing after him. In a Day of Adversity, let us cast our Care upon God, and depend upon his good Providence, and stay our selves upon our God, considering that in his good time, he will bring light out of darkness, and deliver us out of all our troubles : In a time of Prosperity, let us take Care that we be not too secure, let us not be puffed* Ecccl. 7.14.

up, or high-minded, or trust in uncertain Riches, or suffer our Affections and Desires to be drawn out too far after things Temporal, lest hereby, we should finally lose those which are Eternal. But having received *much* from God, let us love him *much*; and by becoming eminent Examples of Piety, Justice, and Charity, make our selves *Friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness*, and secure to our selves a safe retreat in a Day of Adversity. And let us be sober and vigilant, and continually upon our guard, that we may be prepared against those Evil Days; a Day of Affliction, a Day of Sicknes, a Day of Death and Judgment; which will certainly one time or other (and how soon we know not) overtake us.

And in every Condition, let us
submit

submit our selves, and all our concerns, to the Wise Conduct and Disposall of Gods good Providence.

And accustom our selves to acquiesce in every State and Condition

he shall think best for us ; that

we may Transcribe and Imitate

the Example of the Divine Pen-

man of these Words, and say

from the bottom of our Hearts.

The Lord giveth, and the Lord ta-

keth away, Blessed be the Name of

the Lord. To whom, let us ren-

der, as is most due, all Honour,

Glory, Praise, Power, and Domi-

nion both now, and for ever. *A-*

men.

F I N I S.

28 JY 58

By reason of the Author's Absence from the Press, and the Printer's Unskilfulness in the Learned and Modern Languages, several *Errata's* have been committed; the more remarkable may be thus amended.

P. 21. l. 7. read *govern*. p. 30. l. 1. r. *peace-able*. p. 39. l. 10. r. *Manna*. p. 87. l. 8. r. *uncommon*. p. 111. l. 3. post *always* r. *after*. p. 129. l. 1. post *is* r. *by*. p. 130. l. 3. dele *Judges* 14. 14. p. 162. l. 12. r. *ἀνθερωπογενεσις*. ib. l. 20. dele *yet*. p. 174. l. 4. dele *still*. p. 209. l. 20. post *Church of England* r. *somewhat more*. p. 210. l. 2. r. *than*. p. 214. ult. dele *convey*. p. 219. l. 13. dele *for*. p. 251. marg. r. *permanere*. p. 255. marg. r. *ἀνάστασις*. p. 272. l. 4. r. *that that Body*. p. 295. l. 4. r. *dote*. p. 302. l. 6. dele *they*. ib. l. 8. add *and*. p. 309. l. 4. r. *erasing*. p. 395. l. 13. r. *deceive*. p. 398. l. 19. post *Affections* r. *in the Performance of them*. p. 419. l. 23. f. *Heavenly* r. *Cælestial*. p. 427. l. 2. f. *But because* r. *And since*.

by reason of the Author's Absence from
the Press, and the Printer's Unskillful-
ness in the Letter and Spelling, and
some other small Errors, have been com-
mended to the publick, and may be
thought to be such.

TO THE READER
I have been so long absent from the
Press, that I have not been able to
publish as many of my Papers as I
thought fit. I have, however, been
continually employed in the Study of
the History of the English Language,
and have been so much engaged in
it, that I have not been able to
publish as many of my Papers as I
thought fit. I have, however, been
continually employed in the Study of
the History of the English Language,
and have been so much engaged in
it, that I have not been able to
publish as many of my Papers as I
thought fit.

28 JY 58

I have been so long absent from the
Press, that I have not been able to
publish as many of my Papers as I
thought fit. I have, however, been
continually employed in the Study of
the History of the English Language,
and have been so much engaged in
it, that I have not been able to
publish as many of my Papers as I
thought fit.